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MARXISM TODAY

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The front cover designed by Jeff Sawtell is based on the emblem which appears on the banner of the Communist Party of Ireland. It is called the "Starry Plough" and it first appeared as the flag-emblem of the Irish Citizen Army founded by Connolly.

We are very glad to publish in this special Irish Issue of "Marxism Today" seven articles by leading members of the Communist Party of Ireland. We shall publish in July an article by Jack Woddis entitled "Ireland—Common Cause of British and Irish People", which should be studied along with the contents of this issue.

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The Roots of Socialism in Ireland

James Stewart

(Assistant General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)

The history of all peoples, all countries, all nations is the story of class relationships within the different forms of society they have experienced. Ireland forms no exception to this general statement but any objective examination of the history of Ireland's people must from the outset state that from the days of the Norman invasion in 1169 to the present era the development of Ireland, politically, economically, socially and culturally, has been subjected to the interests of a foreign ruling class. It is this factor which provides the key to the understanding of the myriad struggles of successive generations of Irish for national independence, and equally as to why Ireland's invader has been determined over a space of eight centuries to dominate and control this island to the West of her.

Struggle for Self Determination

Through the nature of the historic relationship of Ireland to England we can see that the class struggle in Ireland is not simply one of 'native' exploited versus 'native' exploiter but has as an essential feature the struggle of the Irish people for self determination. In other words the fight for national independence forms an integral part of the struggle for Socialism in Ireland.

Before the Norman invasion Ireland was a tribal society which had developed from primitive communism to the pre-slave owning stage. Successive invasions had consolidated into the Gaelic Clan System. Even the Danish Invasion (795-1014) had it succeeded would not have resulted in Ireland becoming a feudal 'colony' of another state but would have followed the pattern of the previous Celtic invaders and resulted in assimilation and the consolidation of an independent Irish state.

The Norman invasion (1169-1485) did not allow for such a development. It was inspired first of all by the need of Henry II to overcome one of the basic contradictions of *feudalism*: the predatory rivalry of the barons, his vassals, in every part of his dominions. And as that eminent English historian, T. A. Jackson puts it:

> "Ireland was as good a place as any in which to dump that potent cause of mischief—the unemployed problem peculiar to feudalism—the problem of disposing of the younger (and illegitimate) sons and the redundant dependants of the feudal lords," (*Ireland Her Own*, page 18.)

The Pale

But neither Henry II nor any of England's Feudal Monarchy had any intention of permitting an independent feudal kingdom to result from this action. The reverse was the case, the aim was to reduce Ireland to the status of a fief of the King of England. In practice this meant establishment of a special area on the Eastern seaboard, surrounded by a dyke, or palisade, and known as *the Pale*. Inside this area were walled cities. Here Irish dress, speech and customs were forbidden. Native Irish caught here were hunted down like wolves. It was the first "English" plantation in Ireland.

Outside this area, his barons were given leave to carve out land for themselves from the Irish clans. The process lasted for three centuries. During this time the feudal barons found themselves through necessity having to adopt Irish ways—customs, dress and language—in order to find the necessary labour power for their domains, whilst at the same time King after King in England enacted laws to combat this development (1367—Statute of Kilkenny) and thus prevent the danger to England's ruling class of an independent feudal state being established in Ireland. Indeed the major factor which prevented this was the existence of *the Pale*—an area tied militarily, economically, socially and culturally to England. Added to this were the inherent divisions amongst the feudal barons and the continued existence of the Irish clans as a powerful political, military and economic force.

Tudor-Stuart Conquest

Following on the Anglo-Norman period we have the Tudor-Stuart conquest from 1485-1610. This era saw the breaking of the power of the

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feudal barons, the further feudalisation of the Irish clan chiefs and the plantation of large areas of Ireland, both by new landlords and large numbers of new tenants. This process for the Gaelic Irish clansman meant his reduction from a freeman sharing in the clan lands to that of tenant either under the control of a foreign landlord or a native chief turned "English Lord".

Attempts were made, notably in "Ulster" by the Irish clans under the leadership of the Great Hugh O'Neill and Red Hugh O'Donnell to reverse this process during the reign of Elizabeth I. The final defeat of this revolt resulted in the Plantation of Ulster which forms a considerable part of Unionist mythology, but of which T. A. Jackson says:

> "It is in fact a complete fallacy to attribute to this Plantation the peculiar characteristics of political "Ulster". That four out of the six counties planted were never part of "Orange" Ulster (until Partition) and that the two most "Protestant" counties, Antrim and Down, were never included in this plantation are facts which destroy this myth." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 34.)

From 1169 to 1608, feudalism imposed on the Irish people from without had engaged in the process of reducing the Irish clansmen, who under the Celtic tribal system shared in the common ownership of the clan lands, to the position of feudal peasants. The last remnants of this former 'classless' system were finally extinguished during the Cromwellian and Williamite Conquests. The Cromwellian Conquest is distinguished from former conquests by its shortness, and for that reason its more calamitous impact on the 'status quo'. Another distinctive feature is that it arose as a by-product of the revolutionary crisis in England into which Ireland became drawn on the counter-revolutionary side. The consequences of this were disastrous for both the Irish and English people. On the one hand for Ireland it meant further confiscations and the dispossession of countless Irish freemen from their land. For the common people of England, Ireland was used as a vehicle to divert the revolutionary movement, isolate the Levellers, establish the dictatorship of the merchant class under Cromwell, and finally pave the way to the restoration of the Monarchy and the Mercantile Bourgeois-Aristocratic Alliance.

Williamite Conquest

The fourth and final conquest of Ireland—the Williamite Conquest (1690-2)—developed once again out of a revolutionary conflict in England into which Ireland was drawn on the counter-revolutionary ("loyalist") side. This crisis was the *Whig Revolution* (1688) which meant a revolutionary advance in England but involved Ireland in a further subjugation and intensification of the enslavement of the Irish people.

To quote Jackson:

> "Both England and Ireland were pawns in a balance-of-power game fought out on the Continent between Louis XIV and his Allies, on one side, and a European Coalition, (which *included the Pope*, as a temporal monarch, as well as William of Orange) on the other. It was England's good luck that the maintenance of its independence coincided with William's continental interest. It was Ireland's bad luck that it stood to lose whoever won . . . . Apart from the incidental question as to which of two rival Kings of England should rule Ireland, the issue which the mass of Irishmen fought to decide was whether they would be robbed by an English protestant landlord, or a Catholic Irish one. Robbed they were certain to be either way." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 63.)

The Chains of Landlordism

In other words, those Anglo-Norman "Irish" landlords who had been displaced by the Cromwellian Conquest were using the opportunity created by the crisis to attempt to replace their recent English landlord successors. Obviously in this game the common people of Ireland, regardless of which side they fought on, had nothing to gain—the chains of landlordism would remain either way.

In fact the results of the Williamite Conquest were disastrous for the mass of the Irish people. The Cromwellian Landlords strengthened by the addition of new "aristocrats" arising from the results of the Williamite Wars took measures to ensure that their former Anglo-Norman "Irish" (Catholic) class rivals would never again be reinstated. What became known as the "Protestant Ascendancy" in Irish history was the result. Like their descendants the Unionists of latter years, these fine gentlemen deliberately enacted laws designed to discriminate against the mass of the people using religion as a cloak. But not only were Catholics treated as second class citizens under these laws. Dissenters, Presbyterians, in fact anyone who was not a member of the established Episcopalian Church were also treated in this manner. The heaviest burden fell on the working people, the peasants and artisans. Landlord class solidarity always provided a loophole for the Catholic landowner, but for the peasant there was no such escape, only intensified exploitation, humiliation and degradation.

Trade and Manufacturing Suppressed

Added to this "Irish" landlord repression the

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common people of Ireland had to bear the brunt of English Imperial exploitation. Mercantile Capitalism had grown and developed in England since the Elizabethan days. In addition to this small scale manufacturing was rapidly growing. And it was at this stage that Ireland found herself in the position of being England's first colony. For the Merchant Traders and Manufacturers of England, Ireland was a useful source of raw material and a ready and near market, but because of its close proximity Ireland was also a dangerous rival. Thus during the 17th and 18th centuries the English Monarchs and their Administrators suppressed the development of Irish trade and manufacturing.

This of course led to conflict with the developing Irish manufacturing class and also the artisans whose jobs depended on the growth of these industries and trade. Out of this was born Grattan's bourgeois revolution and the attempt to establish an independent Irish Parliament to protect the interests of the Irish middle class. It had as its inspiration the example of the American Revolution (1776-82).

The United Irishmen

It was followed by a far more revolutionary movement, the United Irishmen, which had as its basis the struggle for democratic rights (Catholic Emancipation), the struggle against landlordism, and finally the fight for national independence. Theobald Wolfe Tone, the most outstanding leader of the United Irishmen put the movement's aims very clearly:

> "To subvert the tyranny of our execrable Government; to break the connection with England, the never-failing source of all our political evils; and to assert the independence of my country—these were my objects. To unite the whole people of Ireland, to abolish the memory of past dissensions, and to substitute the common name of *Irishman* in place of the denominations of Protestant, Catholic, and Dissenter—these were my means."

What the American War of Independence was to Grattan's bourgeois revolution the French Revolution was to the Society of United Irishmen. Inspired by the egalitarian ideals and the republican principles of the French Jacobins the movement went far beyond the reform demands of the Irish merchant class and went on to demand an independent republic of Ireland.

In Irish history much space is often devoted to the actual armed uprising of the United Irishmen in 1798 whilst ignoring the fact that the movement developed out of the mass basis of the peasants struggle against the landlords and the fight for democratic rights (Catholic Emancipation). Tone and the other leaders saw the armed struggle and the military movement as an extension of the mass struggle for the emancipation of the common people, and as one which must be firmly based on the political, economic and social needs of the people.

The Orange Order

The movement of United Irishmen was defeated by the forces of Counter-Revolution—a combination of British military might and the divisive and terror tactics of the "Protestant" Landlord Ascendancy. It was during this period (1795) that the Orange Order (or Society) was established by the landlords in an attempt to smash the United Irishmen and the peasants' defence bodies through a combination of sectarian bigotry and outrageous terror. T. A. Jackson correctly describes its political content:

> "In evaluating the Orange Society it must not be forgotten that the bodies it was founded to disrupt and destroy—the United Irishmen and the Defenders—functioned, the one as a great liberating force, and the other as a tenants' protection league and an agrarian trade union. The Orange lodges functioned as a "union-smashing" force, operating in the interest of an oligarchical clique threatened with over-throw by a revolutionary-democratic advance. They constituted the first "Fascist" body known in history." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 129.)

The Act of Union

For the British ruling class the movement of the United Irishmen and the birth of Republicanism in Ireland represented a real danger. By deliberately forcing an armed uprising in 1798 they were able to crush the mass movement. But they realised that a major factor in the growth of such a movement had been the method whereby Ireland had been governed by the "Protestant" Landlord Ascendancy Clique. For British imperialism the needs of her ruling class were paramount over the interests of her landlord allies in Ireland, and so, as often happened before, a new solution was looked for. It was found in the abolition of the Irish Parliament and the Act of Union in 1801.

This Act far from relieving the exploitation of the Irish people intensified it for it laid all Ireland open to the ravages of landlordism, and, with the growth of British industrial capitalism, turned her into a supplier of cheap food and cheap labour. Further, the fact that all the revenue extracted from Ireland by the landlords was drained away for consumption and invest-

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ment in England meant that Ireland's manufacturers were, with few exceptions, left further and further behind while England became, conversely, a better market for Irish agricultural products.

The theory that the Act of Union made one country of Britain and Ireland is contradicted not only by this colonial relationship but by the results of this relationship: the fact that between 1820 and 1850, Ireland was the field for two great constitutional agitations, one agrarian struggle and one attempted insurrection from all of which Britain was free.

Two general conclusions must be made about this period for they have their lessons for the working class movement in Ireland today: First, the failure of the O'Connellite mass movement for reform to transform itself, as did the United Irishmen, into a movement for revolutionary change and thus realise that it had the basis and the means to carry out a *general uprising of the working people*. And second, the birth of the *"physical force"* concept—armed uprisings by *elitist* groups divorced from mass movements and thus not reflecting the political, social and economic needs of the common people—as personified by the Young Irelanders and the Rising of 1848.

The Fenian Movement

The first left the mass of the Irish peasantry powerless to face the *Great Starvation* (The Potato Famine) of 1846-7. The latter was based on "improvisation" and totally under-estimated the needs of the people and the real conditions of the peasantry under the Great Starvation. Thus it failed to rally the masses along lines of action which would have defended and advanced their interests, and instead ended in an abortive uprising of a handful of brave men.

After the Potato Famine two million Irish peasants lay in their graves, another 2 million emigrated as a direct result of the starvation and the land clearances carried out by a "rack-renting" aristocracy. The "Famine", the evictions, the rack-rents, the worsening of conditions, the enforced emigration—these were the root causes of the upheaval of revolutionary republicanism known to Irish history as *Fenianism* (1856-65). This great movement based on the mass agitation of the peasants against landlordism embraced the republican ideals and methods of organisation of the United Irishmen. And like them established strong links with the international revolutionary movements of Europe.

As a military conspiracy the Fenian movement failed completely but it produced permanent results: it re-established for Irishmen the republicanism of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen which became the *norm* of the struggle for National Liberation. It revealed also to the British and the world at large the reality of the Irish aspiration for self-determination. It proved beyond a doubt that as a means of welding two nations into one, the Act of Union was the completest failure ever. Under the inspiration of *Karl Marx* and the *International Working Men's Association* the British Radical and working-class movement returned to the Chartist standpoint and demanded "Justice for Ireland".

T. A. Jackson characterised the Fenian movement as follows:

> "The political content of the Fenian doctrine was consciously and purposefully in line with the teaching of *Tone*, and *Davis*, with an infusion of *Mitchel* and of *Lalor*. It was categorically *democratic*, as well as *republican*, and it was *socialistic*, or even *communistic*, in its agrarian-revolutionary outlook (at any rate in the negative sense of advocating the expropriation of the landlords as a class). Still more was Fenianism categorically hostile to sectarianism and clericalism." (*Ireland Her Own*, page 279.)

Finally it is worth noting, as James Connolly does, that Fenianism, though unquestionably a *national* movement and not a class movement, appealed most successfully to the *wage-worker class* especially among the exile communities in England, Scotland, the USA and Australia.

Land and Parliamentary Movements

The epoch from 1870-1916 had as its peak phenomena Parnell and his *Parliamentary Struggle*, the continuing *Land Struggle*, and, then, *the Revolutionary Struggle*, opened by James Connolly and Padraig Pearse in the Easter Rising of 1916. The Irish situation was altered beyond recognition between 1879 and 1882 by the *Land War*, waged by Michael Davitt and the Land League (with Parnell's powerful co-operation) and by the concurrent rise of Parnell to the leadership of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster. Basically both movements challenged two things: (1) The domination of the land by British absentee landlords; and (2) The domination of the entire Irish economy by Britain. This led not only to the demand for land reforms but also the demand for "Home Rule" in Ireland. In other words the rising Irish bourgeoisie in alliance with the peasantry were demanding an Irish Parliament to protect their interests against British Landlordism and British imperialism. It must be noted that at this stage neither the Land Movement nor the Parliamentary Movement demanded independence, only a limited form of self-government.

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James Connolly

This epoch also witnessed the rapid development of the organised trade union movement under the leadership of Jim Larkin and James Connolly. The growing Irish working class developed not only its trade union organisations but also its political organisations such as the Irish Republican Party, founded by James Connolly in 1896.

Connolly's proposition "that *Nationalism* and *Socialism* in an oppressed country, were not *opposite* as mechanical pseudo-Marxism supposed—but were complementary, each to the other, was treated as a "dangerous heresy" by the leaders of the ILP and of the SDF. It was however, accepted and applauded by a group of young men on the "left" of English and Scottish Marxism, and was finally vindicated by the teaching and actions of Lenin". (T. A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own,* page 356.)

The developing struggle of the Irish people for "Home Rule" led to the growth of a powerful class alliance, composed of the national bourgeoisie, farmers and peasants and workers. For British imperialism it was this latter force which represented the main danger. The British ruling class feared a worker-peasant alliance transforming the reformist struggle of the national bourgeois, the fight for "Home Rule", into a revolutionary struggle with the objective of an Irish Workers' Republic. The work of James Connolly and the alliance of his movement with the Republican Movement of Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood demonstrated to British imperialism that their fear was fast becoming a reality.

The events leading up to the Easter Rising of 1916 and the subsequent War of Independence 1921-22 demonstrated clearly that the 1801 Act of Union had failed. British imperialism was faced with the task of finding a new solution whereby Ireland could be retained under its control. The Liberals who were then the ruling party favoured the method of "Home Rule" to *buy off* the Irish national bourgeoisie and split it from the peasants and workers. This approach was in essence the forerunner of neo-colonialism.

British Tory Strategy

The Tories who were then in opposition and saw the crisis as a means of regaining political power, and, as the most backward and reactionary section of the British ruling class, favoured the time honoured method of using the most reactionary class in Ireland as their allies to divide and intimidate the people. They found such allies already made in the decendants of the "Protestant" Landlord Ascendancy clique. This force formed the leadership and the base for the Unionist Party which gave the Tories the weapon not only to defeat the Liberals but also to divide the Irish people. With this force they split the classes in Ireland vertically and established a Unionist Alliance of landlords, businessmen, farmers and workers. It provided the basis for "Partition".

Most serious of all for the Irish working class and the entire working people of Ireland this strategy of the Tories in reality divorced the national independence movement from the struggle for socialism.

The partitioning of Ireland strengthened reaction on both sides of the border and this temporary solution of British imperialism stunted the growth of working class politics. In the North of Ireland it meant that the working class was divided into two sections politically. The "Catholic" section of the working class in the main, alongside other sections of the anti-Unionist population, was reduced to conducting a purely *"nationalist"* policy for national re-unification, divorced from democratic, economic, social and economic aims. Whilst the "Protestant" section of the working class was reduced to conducting in the main *economist* struggles whilst adhering to the ideology of British imperialism in Ireland —*Unionism.*

But events do not stand still, and Ireland though an island is subject to the developments taking place in the world at large. The change of balance in world forces arising out of World War II, the growing strength of the Soviet Union and the creation of a World Socialist System, plus the rapid pace of national liberation of former colonies led to a new crisis for imperialism on a world scale. Monopoly capitalism faced with this crisis of shrinking markets had to find new methods to overcome this problem. One of those methods was the intensified exploitation of areas either directly or indirectly under its control. Thus with British imperialism the pressure of British monopoly capitalism on both parts of Ireland grew. In practice this meant that branch firms of the large industrial monopolies established themselves in both parts of Ireland. In the North this led to tremendous pressure on the Unionist Party Alliance of landlords, businessmen, farmers and workers. The fact that the monopolies were either driving them out of business or off the land led to seething discontent amongst the ranks of *"Unionism".*

The Civil Rights Movement

When added to this feature the mass struggle

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for democratic rights developed, the instrument of British imperialism in Ireland—the Unionist Party—split asunder. The extent of that split can be judged by the fact that the present British Tory Party abandoned its allies in 1972, suspended the "Northern Ireland" Parliament and imposed "Direct Rule" on the entire population of that area.

Today many people think of the mass Civil Rights Movement of 1968 as a spontaneous movement. But nothing could be further from the truth . . . it has its roots in the work of the Irish Trade Union Congress, the Belfast and District Trades Council, the Connolly Association in Britain and the British Labour Movement, plus the agitation of the Communist Party of Ireland and the Republican Movement.

The period from 1968-73 represents the greatest crisis British imperialism has faced in Ireland since the '20's. This has been brought about by the building of a broadly based mass movement for democratic rights which attacked imperialism at its weakest spot i.e. *Unionist Rule.*

Today through the "White Paper" and the machinations of Mr. Whitelaw the British Tory Party is attempting to find a new solution to the crisis in Ireland, one which will create a new centre force to replace the discredited Unionists and will permit British monopoly capitalism not only to continue its control over "Northern Ireland" but to increase its grip on Ireland as a whole.

Even more than in former days British imperialism is not prepared to allow a free independent Ireland to develop alongside her. The reasons for this are not only economic plunder but also the strategic question of Ireland's geographic proximity to British shores. Anyone who doubts this should read Mr. Whitelaw's third stated aim in the Green Paper (1972).

Solidarity

But the contradictions for British imperialist interference in the affairs of Ireland are not diminishing. The present situation in the North is proving that only too well. And as the effects of the EEC become more apparent and harsh the crisis and struggle will take new forms. At present the major and immediate struggle for the democratic, socialist and national liberation forces is the final destruction of the Unionist Party and the ideology of "Unionism". The means whereby this can be done is the sustained pursuance of the fight for *democratic rights* in "Northern Ireland".

A vital factor in that struggle is the solidarity of the British Labour Movement. This solidarity is not just a simple act of international fraternity with another people, but is essential because the "Irish Question" is one which has been created by the class which is also suppressing and exploiting the British working people. A blow against the Tories policies in "Northern Ireland" aids the entire struggle for the emancipation of the British working class.

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The Forces in the Irish National Liberation Struggle

Tom Redmond

(The author is the Dublin Area Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)

> "*As to any union between the two islands, believe us when we assert our union rests upon mutual independence. We shall love each other if we be left to ourselves. It is the union of mind which ought to bind these nations together*". (Address from the United Irishmen to the English Society of Friends of the People, October 26, 1791.)

The struggle for Irish National Independence is one of the oldest liberation struggles in the world and unique in Western Europe. In it are reflected the typical ingredients of classical colonial struggle, yet Ireland's geographical position in the middle of European capitalist development influences its path. The present crisis is not just an aggravation of an internal dispute sharpened by economic pressures, but is the fundamental clash of interests between Irish democracy which seeks to replace the external property relations of British Imperialism. The concepts which arose through centuries of struggle moulded this desire into a revolutionary philosophy "the reconquest of Ireland by the Irish people"—and also evolved the form in which it could be fulfilled—a sovereign Irish Republic.

The democratic content and the reliance of that movement on the working people ensured the understanding that the relationship of classes within the Republic would be built around the demands of the most exploited. Connolly's contribution was to bring the organised working class into this revolutionary process in alliance with the other social strata restricted by Imperialism, not just as a participating force but as the leadership. This would ensure that the Republic serving the people would be transitory to the Workers' Republic serving the working class.

Much has happened since Connolly's day and there are new stages and new forces in the present crisis. Formerly a British worker may have studied Ireland for interest; today it is a necessity if there is to be a favourable outcome for socialist advance in these islands.

The National Struggle is Moulded

The great sustaining force behind the movements for liberation was the struggle for the land. Feudalism was only established by the invader after hundreds of years of wars, famine and plantations. It was to take the same number of years again before the feudal landlords, losing their supremacy in British politics, crumbled before the combined forces of Parnell's parliamentary agitations and the mass agrarian Land League. Even with the rise of native middle class proprietorship of the land, the agrarian influence has affected the national struggle both by its support and its ideology.

Another influence, both adverse and positive, has been the interweaving of religious freedom as part of the democratic advance within the whole process. It is important for the British people to grasp the significance of this question as it stands outside their own experience. In contrast to the historically and socially progressive nature of the Reformation in ushering in bourgeois democracy to Britain, Protestantism was the mainstay of colonial practice in Ireland.

It was the yardstick to divide the natives from the planters and the anti-Catholic laws were the means by which as Engels remarked "the people are no longer at home in their own country".

Modern Irish politics begins with the concept of Republicanism—the uniting of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter as Irishmen with the reliance on the men of no property and the stirring of the masses who proclaimed the doctrines of the United Irishmen. This great liberating force, combined with the agrarian tenants' organisations, invoked in London the organisation of the Orange Order.

T. A. Jackson in his *Ireland Her Own* described its creation as "a union-smashing force, operating in the interests of an oligarchical clique threatened with overthrow by a revolutionary-democratic advance. It constituted the first Fascist body known in history". From that day, 1795, imperialist strategy in disrupting and shattering the common alliance has been the Orange Card and a criterion of judging the seriousness and determination of any national movement has been its attitude on this question.

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The Working Class

The distorted direction of capitalist development in Ireland, with the favoured Belfast industries forced to rely on Britain, provided the inducement for weaving sectarianism further into the working class. The horizontal divisions in Northern society which responded to the Orange card had later to overcome the formidable weapon of working class solidarity. Connolly's and Larkin's trade union and socialist activities in Belfast demonstrate this force and strength. The creation of Partition was ushered in by driving Catholic workers physically from the shipyards and along with them the militant union men.

In an economy of permanent unemployment and low living standards the system of patronage and privilege dulled the consciousness of the skilled workers who were mainly Protestant in composition. The Catholic worker was low on the priority for jobs and housing and the continuation of the penal law practices meant that he was doubly oppressed—nationally and socially. To re-establish a people's alliance required a healthy and vigorous labour movement and the right to struggle for democratic change. There was to be no wide cross-fertilisation of opinions, however, for draconic laws like the Special Powers Act became permanent in order to beat the "Fenians" back to the ghettoes.

The only force capable of overcoming reaction was the labour movement. Traditionally it stood for the rights of all workers, and practically by challenging the undemocratic nature of the State it could have arrived at the solution of the contradictions of the national question.

The key to this understanding lay in socialist consciousness and the freedom to champion it as a normal part of the flow of ideas. Sectarianism and intimidation from without sought continually to prevent the growth along these lines while the reformism of social democracy hampered its influence. The skilled workers of the Belfast shipyards were the prey, not only of right-wing illusions about the nature of capitalism, but were kept politically in the strait-jacket of unionism. Social Democracy[1] since the day of William Walker (with whom Connolly bitterly clashed precisely on this question), has continuously apologised for imperialism's presence in Ireland. It has not always had its own way. For example, the upsurge of left-wing feeling after the last war brought Socialist Republicans to the fore in the Northern Ireland Labour Party (NILP). Sectarian mobs threatened to break up their election meetings demanding they fly the Union Jack. The leadership flew the Union Jack, expelled half the branches and has ignored the national question ever since. The NILP is today only a rump whose only importance is its trade union affiliations.

The Protestant section of the working class movement has been deliberately shut out from all the healthy currents of development which would flow from Irish Nationality. For many years the fraternal alliance between the trade union centres North and South was broken and though re-established now, is still weak due, not only to the politics of Partition, but to rivalry between British based unions and Irish ones. There is a reactionary attitude found among many trade unionists which argues that the demands for democratic rights for the minority and for the promotion of a United Ireland are themselves sectarian and divisive. Yet at the same time, because Imperialism functions in both parts of Ireland in different forms, it requires different strategies to counteract them.

It is to the credit of the Left that the concept of the stages in the relationship between national independence and the struggle for socialism has been clearly projected. The failure to convince the mass movement due to the factors outlined above, has led the Protestant workers into the blind alley of loyalist organisations like the UDA and LAW. The most pressing issue in the present crisis is to elevate on all the immediate questions the common interests of the working class, thus separating the proletarian base of these organisations from their bourgeois manipulators.

The freeing of workers' minds from the ideology of Unionism will introduce a new qualitative factor into Ireland's liberation struggle because it will return the initiative and ground back to the mass movement, and from that experience will come the demands for an independent nation.

The Republican Movement

The prospects of entry into the European Economic Community marked a turning point in the role of the Southern capitalist class. Formerly there had been an attempt to build a mature economic structure. Several large state enterprises still function, but the principle of succumbing to neo-colonialism was more profitable than resisting it. England's strategy in relation to Ireland vis-a-vis the EEC was "integration within integration", domination by the monopolies but the desire for Partition to remain to divide politically the progressive forces and range them against separate "native" institutions. Internally the Fianna Fail Party abandoned any serious claim to independence, only retaining symbols and rhetoric to appease their mass following.

For the democratic movement this re-alignment

[1] The Social and Democratic Labour Party, SDLP, of Fitt, Hume etc., is not a part of this trend in spite of its unfortunate name. Although its ideology is unclear, because it was formed by opposition Civil Rights MPs and forced to depend on Catholic support, it is radical on social issues and progressive on the national question.

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of class forces led to a revival of socialism. Most affected was the Republican movement[2] already in the process of re-examining the failure of its military campaign in the fifties. While this movement had mainly drawn its support from the countryside and middle-class elements the fact that for the first time ever a majority of workers were engaged in manufacturing and service industries rather than agriculture accelerated the new direction. It is difficult for any such movement to re-orientate given its long historic traditions of physical force and conspiracy arising from its illegal existence. It is a movement in transition and while in the main its analysis has been sound, there are differences within it on its exact character and on its relationship with the working class movement. Its military wing adds an ideological imbalance to its own concept of a "revolutionary working class party" and it presents practical problems of élitism, spontaneity and substituting roles. It has attracted the butterflies of the ultra-left but they have not settled long enough except in Republican circles in Britain.

On the positive side the movement has involved itself in the social struggles of the people. Despite the harassment and provocations of the British Army in the North it has refused to be drawn into conflict on their terms. Its presence is strongly felt in the Civil Rights movement and it has attempted, even in the middle of the bombing, to speak to the Protestant section in class terms. The Republican movement is a fundamental force of national liberation, it works in alliance with the communists and progressive elements and it is a component force for socialism in Ireland.

The Provisionals

The gravitation to the left of the Republican movement was resisted by elements within who were contemptuous of "politics" and saw only the simplicity of physical force. Looking back at the period of the forties and fifties Cathal Goulding said:

> "The evidence was that the Republican movement had no real policies. Without objectives, we couldn't develop a proper strategy. Tactics were all that we had employed. The actual fight for freedom had become an end in itself to us. Instead of a means, it became an end. We hadn't planned to achieve the freedom of Ireland. We simply planned to fight for the freedom of Ireland. We could never hope to succeed because we never planned to succeed."

[2] The term Republican movement is used not only to denote the political wing Sinn Fein, but the IRA and other allied organisations like the Fianna (boy scouts). The term used here is the *Official* Republican movement, often bracketed by the address of their head office (Gardiner Place). I use the term "Provisionals" to describe its rival breakaway.

The armed attacks and pogroms on the nationalist areas in 1969 were successfully beaten back by mass resistance. However, many of the older men who had drifted away from the movement saw in the struggles then raging the beginning of a revolutionary upsurge. Amid the confusion of those hectic days when a movement of solidarity swept the whole country, Fianna Fail politicians in the South, fearful of the consequences of a mass movement no longer under their control, financed and manipulated a wedge in the Republican ranks. The split was formalised in 1970 with the minority walking out of the 4th Fheis (Annual Conference) to consolidate their Provisional organisations outside the nationalist ghettoes of the North. The social composition of the Provisionals was more middle class and mainly rural. That element among the petit-bourgeoisie who hanker for the purity of physical force free from ideology, support them eloquently from the safety of the 26 counties.

In so far as the Provisionals defend the Nationalist areas, or are seen to be capable of doing so from further pogroms, they enjoy support there. The Catholic population, embittered by repression and second class citizenship, separated socially from the common cause with the labour movement, now have the threat of ultra-loyalist attacks and British army terrorism on their heads. These pressures have now magnified backward trends which existed in nationalist politics and which took the form of Catholic Action, "classless" politics etc. It was only a few advanced Republicans who understand the significance of the Belfast Trades Council calling a Civil Rights Conference in 1965 and indeed Pearse's warning in 1911—"the narrowing down of Nationalism to the members of one creed is the most fateful thing that has occurred in Ireland"—was never properly understood.

The military campaign of the Provisionals, particularly the bombing activities, has been fed by all these trends and itself has been sustained by them. The difference between, on one hand, the Left and the Republican movement and, on the other, the Provisionals, is sharp and bitter because they reflect ideological as well as strategical differences, including:

1. The civilian bombing campaign which has reinforced sectarianism between Irishmen to the advantage of Imperialism.
2. The military reflex action to British army terrorism is desired by British Toryism, for it enables the latter to determine the pace on its own terms. It further denies the role of the mass movement to regain the initiative.
3. The confusion of *elements* of national liberation with a revolutionary situation and hence the attempts to bypass the stage of democracy has prevented the Civil Rights Association from

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mobilising the potential of democratic forces and deeper roots.

4. Imperialism is not understood in all its forms, hence no consideration is given to forces which also resist it—the people in the 26 counties and the British working class.

The appearance of the Provisionals is not unique in national independence struggles. Wherever working class leadership is absent the tactics, strategies and content adopted are those of the middle class. The Provisionals are an anti-imperialist force but, in the context of the development and experience of the world-wide national liberation struggle, a more critical attitude must be adopted to them. Conversely the attempts to hurl all the blame onto the "terrorists" must be resisted as many people need to be reminded that there was no Provisional movement before the organised pogrom of 1969.

The Present Stage

The inability of the ruling class in Northern Ireland to accept democratic change under pressure from a wide spectrum of opinion precipitated the crisis of unionism. The Unionist Party, however, was the instrument of Toryism and the excuse for Partition. Britain's claim to sovereignty of a part of Ireland is being questioned more seriously now than in the last 50 years. Whilst the Unionist Party is now suspect because of its unreliability, Toryism has prospective allies in the Southern ruling class and is attracting middle sections typified by the Alliance Party in the North. In the South the ideas of national independence are being constantly attacked as are the historic traditions of the liberation movement.

The slanted presentation of the Northern struggle and the type of warfare being waged by the Provisionals has dulled the solidarity movement. The corrosive effects of Partition in dividing the working class movement plus the fears of alienating further the divisions of the Northern workers has, in the absence of wide left-wing influence, reinforced economism in the Southern Labour movement. The ultra-left have added to the confusion by a hotch potch of fantasies ranging from the two nations theory (i.e. that there are two nations in Ireland, a Catholic one and a Protestant one) to describing the Civil Rights demands as being in essence class demands. The romantic soul of Trotskyism has always been stirred by the sound of gun fire and, by confusing the elements of liberation in the Northern scene with revolution, they are drawn to the Provisionals. While these groups have been contained by the reality of politics in Ireland, their curious amalgams can cause harm by their presentations of the crisis to the British Labour movement.

The most pressing immediate demands for presentation by the democratic movements in the three spheres, the North, the South and also in Britain, are the demilitarisation of the North and the establishment through a Bill of Rights of democratic practice there. Within a framework of progress towards an independent Ireland the common bonds of Irishmen and the class solidarity of workers can re-surface. The greatest obstacle to this is British Toryism, but its strength is derived from the bi-partisan policy of the Labour Party. The tremendous upsurge of militancy by the industrial workers in Britain has inspired the labour movement to confront Toryism on a scale not seen since the General Strike. The interconnection between the sharpening of these battles and the heightened national feeling in the North is not lost on the ultra-right wing of the Tory Party. Already there are disturbing trends towards encroachment on civil liberties in Britain and threats of more to come.

As old as the conscious struggle for Irish nationality is the corresponding response of solidarity from the British people. From the Levellers and the Corresponding Societies, the Chartists and William Morris's Socialist League, the understanding grew that a common fight required mutual support. Projected in its scientific form by Marx and Engels and introduced by them into the First International, it has become ingrained into the socialist movement in Britain as a condition for achieving their own freedom. The complexity of the present situation and its distortion and upheavals call for deeper Marxist understanding of the nature of British Imperialism and a greater resolve to mobilise the widest support for its overthrow in these islands.

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The White Paper on Northern Ireland

Michael O'Riordan

(The author is the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Ireland)

The Act which will be based on the White Paper[1] published in March, will count as the fourth major legislation, over a period of 172 years, dealing with what is called the "Irish Question".

The first was the "Act of Union" of 1801, carried as it was by "perjury and fraud", which integrated Ireland into Great Britain for all time, or so it seemed to its architects. The next Act was the "Government of Ireland Act, 1920", for which no Irish parliamentarian in Westminster, North or South, voted, but by which the British Government partitioned the island. The third was the ratification of the "Anglo-Irish Treaty, 1921" which was signed by the Irish under the British threat of unleashing "an immediate and terrible war". What it did do was to provoke a civil war in the South, over its terms, with London supplying arms and applying pressure on the Conservative Irish pro-Treaty party which later became the first Government of the 26-County state now known as the Republic of Ireland.

Like all the previous Acts the latest White Paper claims to be a settlement.[2] What it really is—is a re-establishment of the British "right" to veto the Irish people's clear right to self-determination.

Fifty years of Partition

In the half-century of the British partition of Ireland into two states, the Republic of Ireland has evolved from a Dominion to a sovereign State, but at the same time into a neo-colony of British monopoly capitalism. Albeit, it possessed the power and the basis—and still does—but not the leadership to alter that relationship.

In Northern Ireland, that north-east part of the island which the British Government retained as part of the United Kingdom, there was created a Parliament with local powers. This Parliament, known as Stormont from the name of the place where it was situated, was the base for rigid rule by the Northern Ireland Unionist section of the British Tory Party.

The five decades of Unionist Government in Northern Ireland were characterised by blatant discrimination against the Catholic minority who had been deliberately incorporated into that state. The purpose of this incorporation was not only to implant a divisive element between the working people of the North itself, but also to complicate the dis-union between the two Irish states.

Unionist rule in the North was based on deliberate fomentation of sectarianism by gerrymandering the electoral constituencies which would give the Unionist party even more power, and by the implementation of a "Special Powers Act" to crush all opposition to the Government.

The partition of Ireland and the naked discrimination against the Catholic minority in the North was resented by the majority of the Irish people and resisted by the minority itself in Northern Ireland by many forms of struggle. Sometimes by protest demonstrations, by abstention from parliamentary elections, or if elected, by boycott of, or obstruction within the Stormont Parliament; other times it was by struggles of civil disobedience, and even by outbreaks of armed struggle by some sections.

To overcome the unjust discrimination against the Catholic minority, and the consequent division amongst the working people, there was set up in 1967, the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA). The significant preparatory work for the emergence of this body, whose campaign over four years altered the entire situation in Northern Ireland, was first done by the Belfast Trade Union Council whose affiliated membership is composed of a majority of trade unionists of the Protestant section of the working class.

On October 5, 1968, a NICRA march through the mainly Catholic city of Derry was broken up in the most savage fashion by the Unionist Government's para-military police. From that act sprang the cycle of violence in the North. In August, 1969, the right-wing of the Unionist Party organised a pogrom in the Catholic ghetto in Belfast. In Britain's "first colony" it was apparent that "law and order" was about to collapse. London ordered the British troops, who were always stationed in Northern Ireland, to intervene. The Government was then

[1] "*Northern Ireland: Constitutional Proposals*", (Cmnd. 5259), Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London. Price 24p.
[2] *Ibid.* Par. 6, page 3.

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headed by Harold Wilson but it made no attempt at real basic reform, instead it preferred to pass as "a peacemaker" in a situation which British imperialist policies had created.

When in June 1970 Governmental power passed back into the hands of the Tories, the Heath Government switched the role of the British Army from pretended "peacemakers" to open repressors of the minority. In August, 1971 a planned military operation swept over 400 anti-unionists into a special internment camp. The entire minority replied with an immediate civil disobedience campaign, refusing to pay rents, rates and any state taxes and by the setting up of barricades created "no-go" areas into which the Army and Police could not enter.

On January 30, 1972, paratroops opened fire on a peaceful NICRA meeting in Derry killing 13 citizens. On July 31, 30,000 troops, a Unionist Defence Regiment and armed members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary plus 50-ton Centurion tanks tore down the barricades of the "no-go" areas and occupied them.

By March, 1972, the British Government was forced to drastically curtail the Unionist monopoly by suspending its parliament and Government and by instituting direct rule from London. In this way whilst it downgraded its agents in Northern Ireland it at the same time reinforced its own position of dominance.

A New Technique of Domination

Stripping down its legal-constitutional verbiage to examine its political content what does one see in the White Paper? As the first paragraph of the statement of the Communist Party of Ireland, issued simultaneously in Belfast and Dublin on March 25, declared "The British Government has been forced after a four-year mass struggle to yield to some of the demands of the Civil Rights Movement, but at the same time adopts a new technique in maintaining British domination of Ireland."

Ireland is not, as some allege, an ancient headache which the British Government would be glad to be rid of. It is a source of labour, land, minerals and the wealth of the sea. More important still it is a source of rich profit, with industry in the North being almost completely owned by British monopolies, and increasingly so in the South. *It is Britain's third largest market in the world.*

In the White Paper Britain has made a much belated admission that indeed there was something rotten in the state of Northern Ireland during the half-century of Unionist monopoly of government. There is now the need "to seek a much wider consensus than has hitherto existed."

In response to the mass struggle for civil rights there is the abolition of oaths and loyalty tests, the promise of financial aid "for the achievement in Northern Ireland of those standards of living, employment and social conditions which prevail in Great Britain." There is the conceding of the NICRA demand that the voting system for local and parliamentary elections should be that of Proportional Representation.

There is to be a "Charter of Human Rights" (Part 4) which will guarantee "the right to freedom within the law, including freedom to advance any political or constitutional cause by non-violent means; the right to protection under the law, so that freedom is not taken away or diminished by violence, oppression or intimidation by others; and the right to equality of benefit and opportunity, so that society will deal in an equitable and even-handed way as between one citizen and another, without bias or prejudice." There is also the promise that discrimination in public and private employment will be acted against.

Further Struggle Needed

These are concessions in principle—but if they are to be implemented in practice it will need still further struggle by the Irish Civil Rights movement and equal pressure by the British Labour, Trade Union and Democratic movements.

The British ruling class does not concede easily. A case in point in the White Paper is the abolition of the infamous Special Powers Act, but it is to be replaced by equally nefarious legislation which is based on the recommendations of a Commission headed by Lord Diplock. This provides for the proscription of organisations which certainly conflicts with the guaranteed "freedom to advance any political or constitutional cause by non-violent means."

Detention without trial was the main bone of contention with the British Government. Despite the inclusion of a high-sounding section on "Human Rights" the White Paper made no reference to the 650 persons so detained at the time of its publication. In fact the new legislation which is to succeed the Special Powers Act will provide for detention and imprisonment with a jury trial, special police powers for arresting and searching, restrictions on the granting of bail and the admissibility of statements hitherto regarded as inadmissible.

In fact the only real concession in this proposed new legislation—Northern Ireland (Emergency) Bill—is the lifting of the ban on the "Republican Clubs", under which title function the branches of the Official Sinn Fein political party.

Downgraded to a Crown Colony

To replace the Stormont Parliament which was suspended in March, 1972, the White Paper proposes a Northern Ireland Assembly. This will consist of 78 members elected by the proportional representa-

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tion method of the single transferable vote in the 12 constituencies which return members to the Westminster Parliament.

Heralded as a new departure in power-sharing as against the Unionist monopoly of power in the suspended parliament, it is provided that "there will be Committees of Assembly whose members will reflect the balance of parties, associated with each Northern Ireland Department. The Chairmen of these committees that collectively will form the Executive will be the political Heads of the Departments and the Committees will be associated with the development of new law and policy."[3]

This really sounds like an attempt at a democratic shake-up, but the document makes clear that in reality there is very little power to be shared. It is only *after* the election that the Assembly will discover what power it will possess, and that will be at the discretion of the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. He (who is likely to be Mr. William Whitelaw who has been the "direct-ruler" since March, 1972) will be the person who will decide, also, who are the Assembly Members who will be allowed to be the Heads of the Departments![4]

This is a classic example of giving people the democratic right to vote, but if they do not elect the kind of representatives that London likes, they will not have any powers, not even the normal right of a parliament to elect from its members a Prime Minister and a Cabinet. The Northern Ireland State has been well and truly downgraded to the position of a Crown Colony. Gone is the pretence of it being a State within the United Kingdom that possessed a special kind of self-government. Its position is now clearly spelt out in Paragraph 54:— "Whatever powers to legislate may be developed upon a regional law-making authority in Northern Ireland, *it must and will be made clear* (my emphasis) that such devolution does not diminish in any way the right of the United Kingdom Parliament to legislate for Northern Ireland."

British Domination Continued

Her Majesty's Stationery Office Document Cmnd. 5259 had been preceded by another publication in October 1972—"The Future of Northern Ireland: A Paper for Discussion." Known as the "Green Paper" there appeared therein the expression, "an Irish Dimension" which implied that any political restructuring in Northern Ireland should be in accord with the Dublin Government and *ipso facto* in some form of an All-Ireland context. This gave rise to many illusions that the British Government, "tired" of the Irish Question, would facilitate the formation of a body—of a supra-border character—that would immediately minimise the effects of Partition and clear the way for one authority for the whole of Ireland.

Conceding that there is in "virtually all the Northern Ireland political parties"[5] a general agreement for some form of a "Council of Ireland", the British Government says that, as far as it is concerned, "it favours and is prepared to facilitate the formation of such a body. . . . There are undoubtedly many matters of substantial mutual interest such as tourism, regional development, electricity and transport."[6]

However before the Heath Government is prepared to "facilitate" what it regards to be the need for "effective consultation and co-operation in Ireland for the benefit of North and South alike", it lays down conditions and in effect establishes the right of a British veto on any talks between Irishmen "North and South alike." This it does by demanding Southern recognition of the present status of Northern Ireland, thus recognising retrospectively the British right to impose partition, and also by demanding concerted governmental action against "terrorist organisations."[7]

Even if Britain agrees to allowing talks for some form of a "Council of Ireland" it will not be a bilateral one between Irishmen of the North and South. The British Government will call the inaugural conference. It will not only be the third party present but will be the key—the Chairman.[8]

When all the talking is done and "firm agreement" is reached, the implementation of the decision will be "formally adopted as between sovereign states."[9] There is no ambiguity there. Since Northern Ireland is not a sovereign state, the agreement will not be one worked out by Irishmen and so giving some substance to a "Council of Ireland", but it will be one that will be ratified by the British Government and the Government of the Republic of Ireland, thus transforming it from an "Irish" Council into an Anglo-Irish Council.

As the statement, already mentioned, of the Communist Party of Ireland declared:—

> "Behind the White Paper's language of 'isolating the extremists in both communities' is the real aim of continuing British Tory political and economic domination in the North, as well as the extension of its economic and political influence in the South. It is for a solution which would satisfy, to a large

[3] Part 6—Summary and Conclusion, Par. 110, (vii).
[4] *Ibid* Par. 72.
[5] *Ibid.* Par. 109.
[6] *Ibid.* Par. 110.
[7] *Ibid.* Par. 112.
[8] *Ibid.* Par. 112.
[9] *Ibid.* Par. 113.

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degree, the Faulkners,[10] Cosgraves[11] and Lynches[12] but which would ignore the interests of all the working people of Ireland, Catholic and Protestant."

The Common Market

The British Government's new technique for holding on to Ireland arises not only from internal developments in the North. These developments led to a discredited and now deeply divided Unionist Party. The pressures that caused this arose from the intensity of the mass struggle that moved forward from the original demand for democratic rights to a position of challenging Britain's right to deny the right of self determination.

The new technique was also occasioned by the accession to the EEC of both Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

It is in this context of the Common Market that the White Paper has been deliberately aimed to win the support of all those who favoured EEC entry in both parts of Ireland. In the North there has been the emergence of a new political party, the Alliance Party, representative of the interests of the propertied classes, to which many pillars of the Unionist Party have switched and which has attracted the support of many middle-class Catholics. This is the new image for old Unionist policies which need to be brought up to date in the conditions generated by EEC membership.

In the South, the two main political parties, Fine Gael and Fianna Fail, support Irish membership of the EEC. The Fine Gael leader, Liam Cosgrave who is now Prime Minister of the Fine Gael-Irish Labour Party Coalition Government[13] is the spokesmen of a conservative-national party which has been traditionally pro-British ever since its acceptance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. In the case of Fianna Fail, which opposed this Treaty, it found in the years it was in Government that as a middle-class party it had neither the capacity nor will to challenge the continued British monopoly capitalist power in the South. During the Referendum on the issue of joining the Common Market it had the support of Fine Gael, then in the Opposition, in advocating membership. (Today, Fianna Fail, now in opposition has a similar supporting attitude to the Cosgrave-led Government in its seeking of an accommodation with the British Government for a "peaceful" solution to the Northern question.)

It is not without significance that one of the main arguments advanced by both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail for the Republic to join the EEC was that in the European Community the "Border" dividing the two parts of Ireland would go.

The Southern bourgeois leaders instead of fighting for the independence of the whole of the island from Britain made the division line between the two parts the national issue. They concealed the fact that British imperialist policies towards Ireland, whether when as part of Great Britain after the Act of Union of 1801, or split into two under the Government of Ireland Act of 1920, or what have you now under the Treaty of Rome, was consistent, as the Communist Party of Ireland declared in March, 1970:

> "Throughout its overlordship the British ruling class has always regarded Ireland as *one unit* for the purpose of exploitation."[14]

EEC Development Area?

Three years later, in March 26, 1973, when examining the proposals in the White Paper, the CPI declared that:

> "The White Paper is deliberately aimed to gain support from the property-owning sections, *on both sides of the border*, who have the common platform of downgrading Ireland as a whole into an assisted underdeveloped region of the rich man's club—The Common Market."

As to the question of Britain's own commitment to assistance to Northern Ireland, the promise is made in Paragraph 86 that it will set out:—

(a) to accomplish as rapidly as possible, once violence is ended, the task of physical reconstruction and rehabilitation created by the disorders of recent years;
(b) to create a sound base for the economy and to encourage external industrial investment;
(c) to work progressively towards the achievement in Northern Ireland of those standards of living, employment and social conditions which prevail in Great Britain.

However, there is no concrete indication of how

[10] Faulkner is leader of the Unionist Party and was Northern Ireland's Prime Minister at the time of the suspension of the N.I. Parliament.

[11] Cosgrave is Prime Minister of the Irish Republic since Feb. 1973.

[12] Lynch was Prime Minister of the Irish Republic up to Feb. 1973.

[13] The Irish Labour Party, which is notoriously weak in its understanding of the national question in Ireland, only half-heartedly opposed Irish membership of the Common Market. In the February, 1973 General Election it abandoned its general socialist programme in order to join with Fine Gael. The platform of this Coalition was concentrated on 'bread and butter' issues, ignoring both the Northern question and the effects of EEC membership. The Labour Party acts now as a subservient junior partner in the National Coalition Government which is dominated by Fine Gael.

[14] "For Unity and Socialism": Manifesto of the Special Re-Unification Congress of the Irish Workers' Party of the Republic of Ireland and the Communist Party of N. Ireland which reconstituted one Communist Party of Ireland, March 15, 1970, in Belfast.

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much money London is prepared to give to provide that massive capital investment that is necessary to overcome the position in which there are at present 40,000 out of work, not because of "the violence", but because of British Government policies which over the *last 50 years* have resulted in Northern Ireland having always the highest degree of unemployment in the United Kingdom.

In the succeeding paragraph 87, there is more than a hint of where the economic "assistance" is to come from: "The United Kingdom Government cannot abrogate responsibility for the application in Northern Ireland of regional policies which will be the subject of negotiations with the European Economic Community in their application to the United Kingdom as a whole."

On April 13, three weeks after the publication of the White Paper, there emerged another set of proposals—but this time from Brussels. These were contained in a programme drawn up by the EEC Commissioner for Regional Policy, Mr. George Thomson. It is at present being considered by the Commission. This programme provides for *the whole of Ireland* being designated a development area of the EEC. The plan before the Commission has taken four regions as being urgently in need of massive development, viz. the whole of Ireland, some parts of Britain and Denmark and Southern Italy.

The criteria for selecting regions that need development are high unemployment, emigration and relatively low incomes. Ireland as a whole can certainly satisfy these requirements. The level of unemployment is seven per cent average as compared with the EEC average of four per cent; emigration from both parts of Ireland is exceedingly high; the average Irish income is approximately half the EEC average.

No definite amount of money has been specified as necessary, but the amount implied in Mr. George Thomson's programme is that it should be far in excess of the £60 million average per year spent by the EEC in its so-called regional development over the past 14 years.

Who will furnish this amount? Will it be the richer nations in the EEC, like West Germany? Again, as in the White Paper the amount and source of the massive aid that is needed is not spelt out and the Irish have a proverb for such situations: "Live Horse and you will get Grass."

What is clear, however, is, firstly, that with the present level of British monopoly capitalism, linked as it is with the European multi-national firms, Ireland divided into two states is an anachronism, which must be re-modelled in the interests of British imperialism in order to improve its role and capacity as one unit and a single peaceful source of rich exploitation. Secondly, that as the British monopoly capitalists take both Britain and the two parts of Ireland into the Common Market, it is at the same time seeking to hold onto the whole of Ireland.

The Long Term Struggle

> "As we have again and again pointed out, the Irish question is a social question. The whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself in the last analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, in Ireland."

Thus wrote James Connolly, in the ultimate paragraph of his classic study of the forces and classes involved in the long struggle for national liberation—*Labour in Irish History*.

The British Government's White Paper is a re-affirmation of its claim to continued control over the means of production in Ireland. Thus it must be accepted that the "Irish Question" will continue to exist, and to be fought over what Connolly said was "the bottom question of Irish politics."

This is the long term struggle, but the immediate one in Northern Ireland is the implementation of genuine democratic rights for all, and the ending of British interference in Irish affairs, so leading to the position where the "Irish Question" can be solved by Irishmen, "North and South alike", as the *White Paper* says. In this way there can be a situation where, as Connolly wrote in the concluding sentence of his book:

> "In their movement the North and South will again clasp hands, again will it be demonstrated, as in '98, that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class, earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united social democracy."

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The Present Situation of the Civil Rights Movement

Edwina Stewart

(The author is a member of the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland and a leader of the Civil Rights Movement)

After the partition of Ireland the democratic and nationally minded people in Northern Ireland suffered almost 50 years of despotic rule by the sectarian and anti-working class Unionist Party. At the end of that period a weapon was found that has smashed the unionist monolith—that weapon was the demand for civil rights and social justice, backed up by a mass movement at home and international support.

These demands were for a fair electoral system and the end of discrimination, the repeal of all repressive legislation, and the creation of a civilianised police force. Very early in the campaign the demand of jobs and houses for all was added.

These seem very simple demands but the Unionist Government was unable to grant them, because granting them meant an end to the Orange Unionist system of Government based on sectarianism, and granting small privileges to the Protestant section of the working class that they denied to the Catholic.

The civil rights movement quite rightly placed the major blame for the situation on successive British Governments, who were quite happy to hide behind devolved powers to the Stormont Parliament until the mass movement drew the veil away. In the early sixties the Communist Party of Ireland pointed out that the fight for democratic rights was a key one in the struggle against imperialism. The labour and trade union movement made the civil rights demands in 1966. At the same time the Republican Movement abandoned its policy of armed struggle for an Irish Socialist Republic, and began to work in a political manner, with civil rights as one of its objectives.

The labour and trade union movement were instrumental in setting up the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, which spearheaded the demand for democracy through the mass movement. Unfortunately the policies of reaction were once again able to divide the labour and national independence movements with disastrous results.

This was done by playing on sectarian fears of the Protestant population and by using violence to produce counter violence, making it impossible for the trade unions to campaign on the streets with the CRA, although they still have a good policy on civil rights.

Reaction was aided in its strategy by the activities of the ultra left, who sought confrontations when the movement should have been making alliances.

What Sustains Violence

Unfortunately or rather fortunately people are not pawns in a chess game who will move in the way that the participants in the struggle want them to. We can all see clearly how the present violence is preventing and delaying a solution in the interest of the working people of this area. To really understand the problems facing the civil rights movement it is necessary to understand why there is violence.

The seeds of violence were always present in an area where there had been an 800 years struggle against British occupation, often through arms, in an area which was partitioned against the wishes of the majority of the Irish people, and in an area where the substantial political minority were denied all civil rights, and even the right to work.

Traditionally the British Government have deliberately provoked violence either by vicious use of their army, or using right wing extremists to make sectarian attacks. Before the pogrom against Catholic areas in Belfast in August, 1969, all major civilian violence had been on the extreme Unionist side, although the police had managed to produce several minor disturbances with civil rights supporters. After the pogrom the Catholic ghettoes armed themselves to defend themselves. These defensive arms were eventually turned against the British

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Army, when it became clear that the British Army was being used as a tool of the Orange Unionist administration.

As repression intensified so did the violence, the support for it among the civilian population, and the demand for democracy. This violence and particularly the bombing campaign had the effect of sharpening sectarian divisions between both sections of the working class. This is surely why the Unionist Government and the present British Tory Government sought to provoke it. In other words a civil rights movement with advocates among both sections of the community, campaigning in a non-violent manner for demands which no British Government could deny in the face of world pressure, could not be allowed to succeed.

They wanted to provoke violence to split the civil rights movement, and lose us our allies. They wanted the demand for an Irish Republic now to be raised to sufficiently alarm the unionist working class, and to encourage the formation of loyalist para-military bodies. In fact they wanted to create such splits, divisions and confusions that the British Government could impose any solution they wanted on this area. If hundreds of Irishmen, women and children, and 220 British soldiers had to die to achieve this, it was a cheap price for British Imperialism.

Divide and Rule

The whole community is sick and tired of violence, longing for peace, but imagine the feelings of our people. After 50 years of the most corrupt government based on sectarianism, violence and repression, people demanding civil rights are subjected to a vicious army of occupation, here to subjugate the natives in the most brutal manner, denied the right to work in many areas, driven from their work and homes by extremist murder gangs and arsonists, denied almost completely any legal redress for their grievances, and with much heralded reform packages melting away like driven snow in the face of increased violence.

Imagine too the reactions and frustrations among those sections of the Protestant working class conned and nurtured for years on the idea that if they voted Unionist their interests would be looked after, and the "rebels" kept in their place, that they "were the people" and that Britain loved them. They are learning bitter lessons, that they have no friends in the world, that the same undemocratic laws can be used against them, that when it is necessary for the British Government, the British Army will use exactly the same measures against them, as in republican areas.

British Imperialism learned its expertise in divide and rule in Ireland, and has created the conditions in which it is all too easy for violence to be provoked in the interests of British Imperialism.

This has been a constant problem for the civil rights movement. When we had a united movement, and our allies lined up, British provocation or right wing violence have put the movement in disarray. This is the problem we are facing today.

Reaction Produced by the White Paper

The situation leading up to the White Paper and immediately after it is extremely complicated. A whole year of Direct Rule by the British Parliament did not bring our people one single democratic reform, or any other reform either. The period was used for softening up what the mass media call the extremists. By the most judicial mixture of public charm and private skulduggery, British statesmen succeeded in persuading the Provisional IRA to break the solid anti-internment front of "no talks until internment ends", and calling a short lived truce, speedily to be broken after the British tolerated right wing provocations. This, coupled with unprecedented army brutality and harassment after Operation Motorman, a vicious campaign of sectarian murders, burnings out, the British Army flirting with the loyalist paramilitary organisations, caused the greatest confusion among anti-unionists.

When Mr. Whitelaw judged that he had succeeded in what he hoped was enough softening up of republican forces, he turned on the loyalist extremists, letting them feel the weight of army brutality, conducting successful arms searches, arresting men for sectarian murders, and interning Protestants. He allowed loyalist extremists to commit the most lawless acts, carry out strikes etc., to isolate them and split the extreme unionists.

During this time the moderates were being lulled along with promises of what great things would be in the White Paper. All this time conflicting versions of what was going to be in the White Paper were spread around alternatively to alarm or placate different interests.

So great is the desire for peace among ordinary people, that when it was published the reaction of the great mass of the people was give it a chance. Mr. Craig and Mr. Paisley could only mount a tiny protest demonstration against it. The Civil Rights Association had the most serious reservations about it, but did not reject it out of hand, confining itself to pointing out the very serious shortcomings.

The language in the White Paper is purposely

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ambiguous, so that it can mean all things to all men. What the civil rights movement must do is to convince as many people as possible that the White Paper does not guarantee civil rights, does not guarantee the provision of employment in this area and does not provide the basis for the end of violence in this area. It will be another disappointment for all those people fervently longing for peace through justice.

Position on the Civil Rights Demands: Fair Elections

One man, one vote for all at 18 has been granted in all elections. The use of PR and the number of representatives to be elected ensure fairly well against gerrymandering. However there is no guarantee PR will be used after these elections. Much of the power has been taken away from local authorities and vested in Stormont, now Westminster. The new assembly will not get any powers unless the people elect the kind of representatives the Westminster Government wants.

End of Discrimination

We are promised that machinery will be set up to combat all forms of discrimination. It will be necessary to wait for the legislation to see whether it will be effective. Certainly the phraseology in the White Paper suggests the machinery will have no quick and speedy method of dealing with cases, and that the individual will have to resort to the courts. We have had an Ombudsman to deal with complaints against the Stormont Government, and a Commissioner of Complaints to deal with complaints against local government. This is an improvement, although the machinery is bureaucratic and must be operated by the individual. We demand machinery which is easy of access, and can give speedy and effective relief, and that organisations that specialise in these matters can have the cases of individuals investigated.

The Community Relations Commission set up after the Downing Street Declaration has been a most helpful body, and has helped many individuals and also to provide amenities in a number of districts. It has not enough money at its disposal.

The End of Repressive Legislation

The Special Powers Act is being repealed, but all necessary provisions are being incorporated into legislation currently being passed at Westminster. These include imprisonment without trial, search without warrant, arrest without warrant, secret trials with witnesses not having to reveal even their face, and no right of cross examination, trial without jury, the accused having to prove their innocence rather than the prosecution their guilt, detention of children, and the outlawing of political organisations.

All this new legislation will contravene the international human rights declarations. Minor concessions have been the lifting of the ban of the Republican Clubs, and the fact that this emergency legislation will have to be renewed year by year. These are very peripheral points however; all the repression which has been such a factor in creating the present violence still exists, plus the continued ban on Sinn Fein, which in fact bars the Provisionals from all legal political activity.

It has also been made very clear in the White Paper that organisations and individuals will have to prove that they are good boys before they can enjoy any of the promised human rights. Those who engage in civil disobedience, violence, or do not help the security forces will have no rights at all. Less progress has been made on this front than any other.

Setting up of a Civilianised Police Force and an Impartial Judicial System

After the Downing Street Declaration the sectarian B Specials were disbanded, and the Hunt Report disarming the police began to be put into operation. This was welcomed by the civil rights movement. All this has been lost in the present violence. The Security Forces, consisting of the British Army, the police, and the Ulster Defence Regiment use the most brutal methods, and all the repressive legislation to enforce the will of the British Government. They have been guilty of torture, assault, vandalism, looting and murder. They go unpunished, except in a tiny minority of cases. Even financial redress is very difficult to get. The behaviour of the Security Forces helps to increase violence.

The jury system remains middle and upper class dominated, biased in favour of Protestants and anti-feminine. The Civil rights movement says the jurors' list should be the same as the voters' list. Far too many judges and magistrates are appointed as rewards for political services to the Unionist Party.

The police and judiciary are now no longer the private weapon of the Unionist Party, but are under the control of Westminster. How they are used depends on the policy of that Government. Generally the judges and magistrates have kept to the rules, but there has been considerable discrepancy on who gets bail, and the length of sentence imposed. Magistrates and judges need to have conferences to make sure there is at least parity in these matters.

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Jobs and Houses for All

At the present moment there is a much higher level of unemployment than in Britain, and this unemployment is not evenly divided, being considerably worse in anti-unionist areas. In one housing estate in Belfast a survey revealed that 47 per cent of fathers in the area were unemployed. Unemployment and the housing shortage in these areas has been made worse by anti-unionist people being driven into the ghettoes or out of their jobs by the intimidators.

The White Paper promises that employment and housing will be brought into line with Britain. What areas of Britain are they talking about however? There is even a question mark over the whole thing, because any development must be in line with Britain's economic policy.

While there is a serious housing and employment problem, it is extremely difficult to end discrimination, and root out the basis for sectarianism.

The British Army

It is very necessary to point out that the British Army is not recognised as an impartial peacekeeping force. This is obviously one of the most difficult questions for the British people, brainwashed by the Tory Government and the mass media. The British Army is used by the British Government as an army of occupation, and behaves as such. The very best recruiting agent for the Provisionals is the British Army. Its treatment of the civilian population ensures that there is a body of support for the Provisionals at least as a force capable of retaliating against atrocities.

This is no accident. It is not just the case of lack of discipline or brutality or bloody mindedness on the part of individual soldiers. It is deliberate Government policy. Since the White Paper there has been a feeling of optimism among ordinary people and considerable pressure on the Provisionals to call a ceasefire.

At the time of writing this is being dispelled by the actions of the army. Since the Republican Clubs have been made legal, they have been harassed more than in previous months,—raids, wrecking of premises and arrest of members for screening. The killing of two unarmed Official IRA men in Armagh, coupled with this harassment, would lead one to believe that the British Government wants the Official IRA to call off their truce. Areas where the Provisionals have strong support have been subjected to so much abuse recently that there is no danger of them being isolated.

The army have also been used to keep the sectarian pot boiling, notably by the use of the SAS or some similar body to carry out explosions and murders when necessary. The evidence is very clear as to army involvement in this. In fact two members of the armed forces are currently facing an attempted murder charge, for some unofficial activities carried out with the connivance of the RUC Special Branch.

We need a change in the role of the British Army; they must be returned to barracks at once, and only used to prevent sectarian outbreaks.

The State of the Civil Rights Movement at the Present Moment

As you can gather it is not an easy situation to work in the civil rights movement at the present moment, with army harassment, violence and fierce sectarian hatreds tending to dominate the situation, and the confusion that the British Government has sowed. None the less the civil rights movement is in a reasonably good shape to continue the struggle. The demands for democracy continue to be a major plank in the programmes of the anti-unionist parties, and to a large extent of the moderate unionist parties also.

The civil disobedience campaign is also continuing. If the civil disobedience committees set up after internment have fallen away in many areas and street activity has been difficult and spasmodic, the civil rights structure remains intact, or is being revived in most areas. The branches are essential for the defence of the rights of the people in these areas, and to point out in the midst of the confusion that the struggle for democratic rights is the key issue, and to organise agitation in these areas.

At the same time efforts are being made to broaden the civil rights movement and its allies. So earnest is the desire for peace that this is meeting with some success. An interesting feature of this was for the reprieve of Albert Browne, a UDA man sentenced to death for the murder of a policeman. Although it was impossible to mount a joint campaign, the groundswell of protest at the sentence from all sections of the community was such, that the man was reprieved. There is now talk of abolition of the death penalty. Oh the lessons that should be learned how the British Government fears above all united action, and will do anything to prevent it! As well as continuing and consolidating the work at home, and ever seeking the broadest alliance, it is also necessary to seek help abroad.

Need for British Solidarity

The first and most important place for the civil rights movement to seek aid is in Britain.

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Although there has been and continues to be help from Irish people living in Britain, we seek the help of the British people. It is not just an Irish problem with the British people lending an odd hand. *This is also a British problem.* The British Government have a peaceful and democratic solution to their hand, and we ask the British people to change the policy of their Government.

Firstly we ask the Parliamentary Labour Party to end their policy of bi-partisanship with the Tory Government. There have been signs that this is going to happen through the Emergency Provisions Bill.

Secondly we ask the British Labour and Trade Union movement to throw its full weight behind a democratic solution to our problems.

Thirdly we ask for the support of the great liberal British tradition in our struggle.

It is very difficult to break through the paper curtain the press and television have erected. We ask that the truth about Northern Ireland is told through the progressive journals. The Civil Rights Association and other bodies do their best to supply information to as many individuals and organisations as possible in Britain, and throughout the world. This is difficult for us as we are short of cash to employ the necessary workers to do this job properly.

Cash is needed for everything, legal work, organisation, relief, and the dissemination of information.

One form of international work which should strengthen the hands of our friends in Britain, is through the European Commission on Human Rights, and the Protection of Minorities and Prevention of Discrimination Sub-Commission of the UNO.

The Irish Government took the British Government to the European Commission. The whole of the White Paper is designed to be an answer to the charges there. Because the Civil Rights Association, and the Association for Legal Justice encouraged two civil rights lawyers to take 7 torture cases there, which have been recently accepted for further investigation, it will be very difficult for the Irish Government to declare itself too easily satisfied. A case is also being prepared for the UNO by various civil rights and legal justice bodies, though the speed at which this case will be taken depends on finance.

We know these cases severely embarass the British Government, and make their violations of human rights more difficult, and certainly the British people will not like to see their Government branded before international bodies.

The Civil Rights movement has support groups in the USA, Australia and New Zealand, and relations with many important international bodies such as the International League for the Rights of Man, the World Peace Council. We have received help from most European countries, sent speakers to them, and received messages of support from the Arab countries and Latin America.

Main Civil Rights Demands

The main demands of the Civil Rights Association and many other bodies at this moment are:

The end of imprisonment without trial, and the repeal of repressive legislation.

The immediate withdrawal of the British Army to barracks.

The immediate passing of a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland by the Westminster Parliament.

This has been a long and bitter struggle for our people. The granting of full civil rights and social justice is the only peaceful and democratic way forward. It is the only decent way forward for the British people. Both our peoples have hard lessons to learn. Our people must learn that sterile physical force is no solution to every problem, and that while one section of the working class is prepared to enjoy privileges they deny to another section, they can never be free themselves. And the British people must remember Marx's words when he said the British working class could never be free while it tolerated the subjugation of Ireland.

BRITAIN and the IRISH CRISIS

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by

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Trade Unions in Ireland

Betty Sinclair

(The author, who is writing in her personal capacity, is the Secretary of the Belfast Trades Council)

> "*In understanding Carson and the Unionist leadership in 1912-14 we must be very clear that they were risking a lot. But the stakes were high. The more economically-orientated Unionists, and there were many, well knew they were hoping to protect and improve their investments; the more socially-conscious were anxious to uphold their position. Birmingham testifies to upper-class awareness that the struggle on which they were engaged was partly viewed as a means of eroding class conflict by the exacerbation of workers' and petty-bourgeois anti-Catholic sentiment and its deployment under upper-class leadership . . . the Unionists could not make enthusiasts of their lower-class followers, they could simply channel the enthusiasm and hope to control it.*" (*Owen Dudly Edwards*, Irish Times, *March 22, 1973*, "*Carson Agonistes*").

The trade union movement in Ireland has a very long history. Its development into a strong *national movement* was hampered especially after the full effects of the Act of Union 1801 began to bite into the economy to the advantage of industrial development in England. Industries that had been growing in the last half of the 18th century were ruthlessly sacrificed to the needs of the dominant economy and position, i.e., of British imperialism. Local trade unions, which sprang up and which offered opposition to home conditions, begot, as emigration grew, a "one-ness" of interest between trade unions in England and Ireland.

The Process of Division

As the struggle for Home Rule grew, English and Irish Conservative interests took up the challenge and Randolph Churchill introduced, for the first time, the "Orange Card" to divide the workers and their organisations and to pull them behind the chariot of Conservatism and against Irish nationalism and a national trade union movement. In the 1910-14 days, when James Connolly was pointing out the dangers of a divided nation and especially so for the working class, Carson and Co., understood quite well their class interests and the "eroding of the class interests", because there was more employment of the working class in the North with the shipyards, linen industry, etc., which was not an accident.

And, as the years progressed and the big events such as the Russian Revolution took place, the upper class in Britain and Ireland were not under any illusions that the "times were a'changing". The middle class of the rest of Ireland were willing to settle for something less than "revolution" and "the most stupid employers in Europe", as Connolly called the Dublin employers in 1913, were able to make a deal for a divided country which politically, economically, socially and culturally, cut off 26-counties from the 6-counties and Connolly's fear was realised. It is difficult for British workers to totally understand why Northern Ireland workers do not seem to fight on "bread and butter issues". After the keeping of the whole problem under the carpet by both British Conservative and Labour Governments for half a century, it was not easy for such workers to appreciate the fact that the struggle of the Irish workers could not be a duplicate of the struggle of the British workers. The unfinished business, i.e. the national question, left a weapon in the hands of reaction both in the North and the South.

In the North, the ruling class had control of central and local government, control of the industries, control of the provision of homes, education, social and cultural facilities. They had also control, in the last two decades, of the diversification of industry and the development of a new infrastructure. The plans meant favouring a "greater Belfast", i.e. taking a radius of 30 miles, and ignoring areas such as Counties Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone where Unionist support was thin on the ground. This meant, in turn, that the trade union movement grew in the former areas and jobs were available for supporters of Unionism—and not for those in the opposition.

Trades Union Congress

Despite all the difficulties, the Irish Trades Union Congress was formed in 1894 to deal "with Irish problems". It remained in existence until 1945—taking the strains of two world wars—when a number of Irish-based unions disaffiliated on political grounds. There was a fear that the progressive politics which emerged during the struggle against fascism would find a reflex in the 26-counties and Right-Wing Social Democracy resented what they called "British politics". Secondly, they put forward

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the case for "Irish-based trade unions" as against trade unions controlled from Britain.

The struggle for re-unification went on until 1959 when the two trade union centres came together to form the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and a new Constitution which emphasised the "Irish" nature of the Congress. The Congress, in its earlier formation, had been refused recognition by the Stormont Government. To help meet this difficulty a Northern Ireland Committee was set up in 1945 with powers to deal with the Government. The Committee was retained after 1959 but still Stormont refused to budge. They stated that the Committee had its headquarters in a "foreign country", i.e. Dublin. It was not until 1964, a year after the O'Neill Administration took office, that recognition was afforded and the Committee could then act on matters of legislation facing the workers.

It will be readily recognised that there are difficulties in that Congress has to deal with two Administrations bringing forth two sets of legislation.

The degree of trade union organisation in Ireland is about the highest in Western Europe. In the Republic the percentage of employees in trade unions is 52 per cent. In Northern Ireland the percentage is 54. The overall percentage for all-Ireland is 53 per cent. The problems arise when one examines the trade union base. Unions with head offices in the Republic cater for 55 per cent of the total members; with head offices in Northern Ireland, 2 per cent; and with head offices in Britain, 42 per cent. In Northern Ireland the problem of allegiances is clearly seen in the fact that 84 per cent of employees are members of British-based Unions and 15 per cent in local or Dublin-based unions. The reverse is the position in the Republic—86 per cent are members of Irish-based unions and 14 per cent in British-based unions .(All figures relate to the year 1970).

Common Market and Monopoly

The total membership at 1970 was 649,800 and in numbers and potential strength Congress represents the best base with which to face the big problems that have come to the fore. The British Government, during the O'Neill Unionist regime began seriously to work for entry into the EEC. The plan was to pull the whole of Ireland in behind imperial Britain and so strengthen her position within the Community. Already both the North and South were dependant on Britain for their export trade. British and other monopolies, by the 60's had more or less driven local enterprise off the map in the North. The task was to do the same in the Republic and, despite the problems that arose from 1966 to the present day, those plans go steadily ahead.

O'Neill's talk with the leaders of the Republic brought out the old resentments that Unionism had thrived on. The Civil Rights struggle opened out in 1968. Nevertheless, Britain's plans gathered momentum. After the vote of May 10, 1972, in the Republic to join EEC the influx of British monopoly became a flood. This take-over or merging of industrial interests was duplicated by a growing closer of the banking systems and now there is a United Stock Exchange covering the two islands. Chambers of Commerce have found a greater identity of interests and the Confederation of British Industries and the Confederation of Irish Industries are working jointly to exploit the economy of the whole country.

The aim is to further encourage outside interests. Sir Brian Morton, chairman of the Derry Development Commission and a very rich businessman, stated recently that he hoped Northern Ireland, *which has so much to offer international companies*, would resume its prosperous position in the world. The old formula of "maximum assistance and minimum interference" to the monopolies still goes ahead. Assistance given in this way, in Northern Ireland, reached a total of £393,639,662—from 1945 to December 31, 1972. Most of this money has been paid out to big British, American, Dutch and French companies and the profits made go out of the area to the detriment of any further development.

Impoverished State

The trade union movement has played an important part in order to evolve a political policy that will best benefit the whole country. In the recent policy document which brought together 400 representatives from 95 organisations in Belfast, a call was made for the abolition of poverty, the achievement of an equitable order, human rights, the development of resources, security and liberty, greater co-operation in education, plans for employment, for housing, public enterprise, reconstruction by way of a crash programme to provide jobs and end discrimination in employment.

Much work lies ahead to achieve these objectives. In 1966, the total personal wealth in the Republic was £2,121 million and in the North, £1,552 million. But no wealth was possessed by 60 per cent of the people in the North and 65 per cent in the Republic. Latest figures for unemployment were 72,094 in the Republic and 34,624 in the North. Both sets of figures are suitably "doctored" and the hopes for the future are not good unless the trade union movement fights back. The British Government Actuary, in preparing accounts for the Social Security Bill 1972 on the Financial Provisions of the Bill relating to Northern Ireland (Cmnd. 5269) stated, in paragraph 16, page 7, "The rates of unemployment *on Government instructions* are $2\frac{1}{4}$ per cent in Great Britain and 6 per cent in Northern

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Ireland". (My emphasis). The calculations of the Actuary were made up for the years to 2005-06!

The Actuary stated, in dealing with his calculations, that there had to be taken into account "the lower level of earnings which, together with the effect of higher rates of unemployment and sickness, results in the expected average of annual contributions per male employee in Northern Ireland being only about three-quarters of the corresponding amounts in Great Britain". (Paragraph 17). It is clear that the British Government does not intend to bring workers here to parity of earnings, incidence of sickness and unemployment with the workers in Great Britain—our impoverished state is to continue. This means that the programme of Congress must be fought for to end this colonial approach to our people.

Housing and Education

Programmes for housing needs are very necessary. In 1945, there were 100,000 unfit dwellings in the North. In 1973 there are still 100,000 which have been declared "unfit" and 30,000 of these are located in Belfast alone. In the Republic the position is no better and, with the high interest rates for owner-occupiers, working class families face great hardship. The housing problem in the North has been made worse with the movement of families because of intimidation and worse—a conservative estimate is that 20,000 families have changed their abode since August, 1969, the majority of whom have crowded into the anti-Unionist areas and are very much overcrowded.

There is growing concern about educational facilities. Although receiving state funds, the 81 private grammar schools with the help of successive Unionist Administrations have refused to develop any form of comprehensive education. Grammar school places are at a premium and the number available determines the number of children who go on to higher education. The segregation of the school system, since the inception of the state, has prevented efforts to end sectarianism and bigotry and the blame for this situation cannot be laid wholely at the door of the Catholic Church. The trade union movement has asked all the interests to come together on the problem and "provide full protection for all religious and cultural interests and in *which the educational interests of the children will be paramount*".

The problems which we face will not be overcome in a short space of time. Congress has, therefore, called on all political organisations in Northern Ireland, the Republic and Great Britain;

(a) to reject violence, and
(b) to accept the principle of non-discrimination, and
(c) to accept the right of persons to peacefully advocate political change, including changes in the constitutional status of Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland.

New Attempts at Division

One of the problems that has arisen is that of Congress maintaining the leadership of manual and salaried workers. In the camp of ultra-Unionism, efforts are being made to subvert the allegiance of the workers with the aid of the so-called Loyalist Association of Workers and the recent call by Rogers of the Young Unionist Council and now of Craig's Vanguard Unionist Progressive (sic) Party to reform the old Ulster Unionist Labour Association which had its birth in the strike for the 44-hour week in 1919. This Association was used by the Unionists to "erode class conflict", Carson's policy, but became negligible after the last war. Rogers and Co. hope to win the workers on the basis of all the old, rotten and outworn bigotted slogans which kept Unionism in total power for over 50 years.

One cannot say that the Whitelaw regime is doing anything to curb such sectarianism and it is not in their class interests to do so. Manufacturing production increased in the North by 64 per cent between 1962-72. Productivity per employee has risen since 1963 by 55.1 per cent, as against 38.7 per cent in the UK. Per capita Gross Domestic Product as a percentage of the UK figure rose from 63.4 per cent in 1960 to 71.7 per cent in 1970. Since 1966 exports, calculated at constant prices, have risen on average by 6.5 per cent each year, and imports by 7.2 per cent. The injection of capital into the area's infrastructural services is estimated to involve a total of over £3,000 million by 1975—most of which has benefited British monopoly capital.

Irish and British Workers for Unity

Over the recent years liaison has grown between the British and Irish Trade Union Congresses and the former have supported the call for a Bill of Rights—already the policy of the ICTU. What needs to be undertaken now is a campaign to explain the situation to British Trade Unionists. They must be made aware of history and the background of the struggle here and the real difficulties that face workers in Ireland. The demand for democratic rights touches more nearly workers in Britain as they meet the forces of the law in relation to wage struggles and picketing. The overall strengthening of democracy becomes more necessary as the Heath Government proceeds to enact *undemocratic legislation* for Northern Ireland. The outcry of the Tories—and some others—for "law and order" will not fool the British people. Tory "law and order" means that workers are underneath and the bosses are on top. Together we can rid ourselves of this most infamous Government.

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The numerical strength of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions—over 600,000 and forming 53 per cent of all employees—and its leadership are vital and would be a determining factor if the country was united. It is not in the interests of the capitalists in Britain, Northern Ireland and the Republic—and further afield—that unity should come about. But it is in the interests of the workers of these two islands to foster that unity and on that basis build up the unity and friendship so necessary to defeat the bosses here and in the EEC.

The Communist Party of Ireland

Sean Nolan

(The author is the Chairman of the Southern Area Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland)

The Communist Party of Ireland was re-formed 40 years ago, in June 1933; it has been in continuous existence since in the Six Counties; in the Twenty-Six Counties it has functioned as the Communist Party, as the Irish Workers' League, the Irish Workers' Party and since 1970 again as the Communist Party.

The Communist Party of Ireland first came into existence in 1921 when the Socialist Party of Ireland, following discussions and some expulsions, was transformed into the Communist Party of Ireland; it became a section of the Communist International.

The Socialist Party of Ireland was revived in 1917, following the 1916 Uprising, but in the years until the truce of 1921, because of the Black and Tans and a strong British military presence, making political activity very difficult, the Party functioned intermittently, with no newspaper or public activities.

The defeat of Czardom in February 1917 and later the Bolsheviks success in October were hailed in Ireland by the Labour movement and the radical republicans. The National Executive of the Irish Labour Party and the TUC greeted "the triumph of the workers, solidiers and peasants of Russia . . . with unbounded delight; . . . the Irish workers welcomed the establishment of the Soviet Republic".

Early Days

Following the 1921 July truce which led to the opening of negotiations between the Republican Government and the British Government, the Socialist Party of Ireland resumed public activities and published the weekly paper, *The Workers' Republic*. R. J. Connolly (son of the executed leader of the 1916 Uprising, James Connolly) was the Party's chief spokesman. The Party's membership was small and its activities were mostly confined to the Dublin area.

The CPI strongly opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty settlement signed by Collins and Griffith in early December 1921 in London, which led to the establishment of the Irish Free State. The CPI declared the Treaty terms were a betrayal and abandonment of the fight for full national independence. The Party's position had an impact on some Republican leaders, such as Liam Mellows, who, later, while a prisoner in Mountjoy before his execution, endeavoured to influence the Republican forces to see the importance of a radical social policy to be joined to the military struggle.

The Labour and trade union leadership took up a position of so-called neutrality between the two sections of the Republican movement on the Treaty terms; it had a like position in the Civil War which started in June 1922 and went on for almost a year. The Labour members of the newly-created Free State Parliament took their seats and assumed the role of the Opposition; the anti-Treaty Republicans, refused to recognise the Free State and abstained from all participation.

The CPI joined with the anti-Treaty Republicans in the Civil War fighting in the Dublin city area, which lasted for a week. After the fall of Dublin to the Free State Government forces, the Party carried on under difficult conditions. It remained small in numbers but endeavoured to

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influence the Republican leadership from pursuing a purely military position.

In the early part of 1923, following his attendance at the 4th Congress of the Communist International, R. J. Connolly returned to Dublin. In his report he put forward the viewpoint that since the military struggle in the Civil War was not going in favour of the Republicans, the emphasis should be on a resumption of political action in the form of the Republicans abandoning abstention and taking their place as the main Opposition in the Free State Dail Eireann. The military units of the Republican movement were to be maintained, but not in active service.

From the Republicans, R. J. Connolly's proposals were strongly denounced by Peadar O'Donnell, and, as well, within the Communist Party there was opposition to Connolly's proposals.

At this time, Jim Larkin, the 1913 Dublin Strike leader, had been released from jail in America after serving some 30 months of a ten-year sentence for alleged criminal anarchy. The CPI in Ireland and other left forces hailed Larkin's release and his early return to Ireland.

Jim Larkin Returns

Larkin returned to Ireland in April 1923. He had left the country in late 1914 following the end of the six-months long Dublin Lock-Out. In America he was identified with the left groups; he was a strong supporter of the Russian Revolution and was involved in the foundation of the CPUSA. He opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty when its terms became known.

In a short time after his return Larkin was in headlong collision with the leadership of the Union (ITGWU) which he had helped to found in 1909. He also made it known that he would not co-operate with the CPI.

Larkin, with his fame in the 1913 struggle, had considerable support among Dublin workers. A breakaway from the ITGWU was formed, called the Workers' Union of Ireland. A large membership among the carters and dockers was won for the new union. The Workers' Union of Ireland became a section of the Red International of Labour Unions (RILU) and Larkin was elected to its Executive Committee.

The "Irish Worker League," which was launched in the latter part of 1923 never really functioned as a political organisation. The CPI, in face of Larkin's attitude, terminated its existence and offered full support to the Irish Worker League.

Larkin's Role

The IWL was brought into existence at a big meeting in Dublin's Mansion House and some hundreds of workers joined. It became a section of the Communist International and Larkin became a candidate member of the Executive of the International at the 5th Congress of the CI.

Bob Stewart, a veteran of the British Communist Party, came to Ireland in 1924 to help in the development of a Communist Party. In his book, *Breaking the Fetters* Bob Stewart writes:

> ". . . the political and economic conditions in Ireland necessitated a Marxist Party with a solid basis in the Irish trade union movement. My work was to see how this necessity could be achieved. . . . Big Jim Larkin was then the best known trade union leader in Ireland . . . and naturally any hope of success in my task rested on my ability to interest Larkin in the formation of a Marxist party . . . I spent months working with Larkin in the attempt to found a Marxist party in Ireland. . . . Working with Larkin and the other Marxists, both in Dublin and in the country districts, I soon found that one of my greatest difficulties was to keep the peace among our own people. . . . Larkin was the biggest problem because he always personalised his politics. . . . I got on well with Larkin and I was one of the few men he really trusted politically. Lenin said of Larkin, 'His remarkable oratorical gifts and seething Irish energy performed miracles among the Irish workers.' That was justified. He was a powerful and popular speaker. . . .The aim of the group I was working with was to plan a political campaign leading to and culminating in the formation of an Irish Marxist Party. In Ireland at that time politics took a wide sweep. Poverty in some places was desperate, and it was necessary not only to recognise this politically but to do something about it. So we were constantly engaged in relief work. . . . With the tremendous political campaigning and the prodigious relief and welfare work we got a good political footing in many Irish counties, but most important and best of all in Dublin. We decided the time was opportune to launch the call for the formation of a mass Irish Marxist party. . . . After much deliberation and argument we drew up a manifesto and organised a mass demonstration in the Mansion House. It was essential to get Larkin to sign the manifesto and I discussed this with him many times . . . but it was never signed. . . . My own opinion is that Big Jim would never accept the democracy of a disciplined Marxist party. He always had to be in the centre of the stage all the time, and so to join a party where the emphasis is put on collective work was not for him. . . . In 1924 the political situation in Ireland was ripe for the formation of a Marxist party based on the Irish workers' organisations, principally the trade unions. Larkin's refusal to play his part in the creation of such a party greatly weakened the fight. The result was that much of the good work done over the years preceding 1924 ran into sand and failed to bear fruit."

Larkin's identification with the Communist International for all practical purposes came to an end in 1928. There was no formal break or

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public announcement; he continued to be a strong defender of the Russian Revolution and its aims. From then on his main preoccupation was with the difficult job of holding together the Workers' Union of Ireland which, having been involved in a whole number of strikes was in bad financial circumstances, not winning any new membership, if anything losing them. Generally at the time and for some years later the whole working class movement was not in a strong position to resist the employers' offensive for wage reductions and worsening of conditions. The divisions within the working class movement were used to advantage by the employers.

The Irish Worker League or the Larkin-ITGWU clash did not extend to Belfast or the other areas of the Six Counties. The left-wing elements in Belfast, Derry and the other Northern areas found their own forms of organisation and activity on a local basis.

New Initiatives

In Dublin the former members of the Communist Party and new forces which had come forward in the years since, finding it impossible to be involved in political activity in the non-functioning Irish Worker League, founded the Connolly Workers' Education Club in 1925, and endeavoured to do some of the work, at least in the field of Marxist education and public lectures, which should have been undertaken by the Irish Worker League.

In 1929 the Revolutionary Workers' Groups came into existence; at the start these were confined to Dublin and Belfast, and later groups were started in Cork, Leitrim, Longford and among the miners at Castlecomer. The groups had the aim of building support for the re-formation of the Communist Party on an all-Ireland basis.

In 1929 the groups started a weekly paper, *Irish Workers' Voice*. In Dublin the groups were in the leadership of the struggles of the unemployed. At the time unemployment was as high as one in five of the insured population. Money payments were only paid to those who qualified with insurance stamps; unemployment assistance or other forms of social welfare, as known today, did not exist. The Free State Government to help balance its Budget, reduced the old age pension from 50 pence a week to 45 pence.

In Belfast, in October 1932, the RWG led the great struggles of the unemployed for improved relief rates. Street battles developed in which the police killed two workers and wounded a number of others. Tom Mann, the veteran British Communist, was deported back to Britain. The magnificent militancy and unity of the workers, Catholic and Protestant, compelled the Stormont regime to increase the relief rates.

With the help of the socially progressive elements among the IRA leadership, the groups in Dublin were involved in educational work among some sections of the IRA. A number of members of the groups were also members of the IRA.

Bob Stewart was back in Ireland, as helpful and as popular as ever with those engaged in the work of preparing the way for a Communist Party. Bob with Sean Murray and Jim Larkin jun., initiated group organisation among the Castlecomer miners. Trade union organisation was virtually non-existent among the miners and wages and conditions were very poor. The RWG took the initiative in developing trade union organisation. The Irish Mineworkers and Quarrymen's Union was formed. Nicholas Boran became the Secretary. The first success of the union was to have Boran elected as checkweighman.

Reactionary Offensive

In a short time the local reactionary forces gathered together to down the new miners union. The Prior-Wandsforde family had owned the mines for generations and did not want effective trade union organisation among their workers. Although of planter stock and never in sympathy with the national aspirations of the Irish people, they sought and got the backing of all sections of the propertied people, regardless of religious or political attachments to undermine the miners union. The local press played up the "Red" scare and the national press were drawn into support. The heavy hand of the Church was conscripted, there were the Sunday warnings from the pulpit and when these appeared to be not succeeding, the Bishop was brought into the Castlecomer area amidst much publicity to put the union and all who continued to be associated with it under ban.

In the face of the large-scale offensive by reaction, it was vital to safeguard trade union organisation among the miners; this was done by the miners becoming a branch of another union, with their own officials and committee to defend and advance their interests.

Whenever and wherever possible the reactionary forces, clerical and otherwise, used their power and influence to obstruct the development of the Communist movement. The weekly paper—*Irish Workers' Voice*—was first printed in Longford, but soon clerical pressure compelled the printer to stop and this was to be the experience with a number of other printers and in 1935 the paper had to be printed outside the country. In

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the 1950s and into the 1960s, in the cold war days, the Party had similar printing difficulties, even our nominated candidate being denied printing facilities.

Revolutionary Workers' Groups

In the general election of 1932 there was a great mobilisation of the forces opposed to the Free State Government to ensure its defeat after being ten years in power, during which the working people suffered high unemployment, wage reductions and almost no social welfare services, and the anti-Treaty Republicans, defeated in the Civil War, were harassed in every way, with jailing and denial of employment on political grounds. The Revolutionary Workers' Groups nominated candidates in two Dublin constituencies; they joined with the other forces in calling for defeat of the Cosgrave regime, but were sharply critical of the deValera's Fianna Fail.

The general election resulted in the defeat of the ten-year-old Free State Government; with the support of the small number of Labour deputies returned, Fianna Fail had a majority to form a government.

The RWG resumed legal activities, having been proscribed, along with twelve other organisations, six months earlier under a Coercion Act of the Cosgrave regime. The RWG resumed publication of their weekly paper, public meetings and other activities. In the changed political situation the anti-communist campaign did not diminish, in fact it greatly intensified. From the ranks of the defeated Cosgrave Free State party there emerged the fascist Blueshirts, much encouraged by the successes of the Hitler-Mussolini fascist movements.

Communist Party Reformed

It was in the situation of this fascist challenge to all the forces of democracy that the RWG convened the conference to re-form the Communist Party of Ireland; it was held in Dublin, in June 1933, and had to be held in semi-legal conditions.

A short time before the Party headquarters had been under a three days siege by a combination of Blueshirts and a clerical-inspired mob; it was some time before the premises could be re-occupied.

The conference to re-form the CPI was presided over by Jim Larkin jun. The Party Manifesto, later published as "Ireland's Path to Freedom," was introduced by Sean Murray, who was elected the Party's General Secretary. The Manifesto emphasised that the Irish capitalists' interests could never be relied upon to bring to a successful conclusion the fight for Ireland's independence. It repeated the proposition of James Connolly that "the Irish working class remained as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

The deValera Government dillied and dallied in the face of the Blueshirt challenge. It was on the streets of the towns, cities and villages of Ireland that the Blueshirt challenge was met and defeated by the militant workers and the IRA rank and file. It was constantly demanded by the Communist Party that the Labour and Trade Union movement organised action by the workers to halt the threat from Blueshirt fascism. There resulted the massive demonstration of thousands of workers in Dublin in 1934 which served as a warning that the working class movement would resist the fascist challenge.

Fight against Fascism

From the deValera Government there was the revival of the bad and anti-democratic legislation of the Cosgrave period to be used to tackle the Blueshirt threat. The CPI warned and protested against this legislation being re-introduced under the pretext of dealing with the Blueshirts; it could, urged the CPI, as required, be used against Republicans, Communists and others. The IRA leadership at the time was generally uncritical of the deValera policies.

In time the CPI was proved correct; the revived anti-democratic Cosgrave Government's "Offences Against the State Act" was brought into use against the IRA and militant workers and military courts were restored to send people to jail it would have been impossible to get convicted in the ordinary courts.

The struggle against the local variant of Blueshirt fascism shifted to the international scene with the Franco rebellion in Spain in 1936. Irish Communists and left-wing republicans joined with the communists and anti-fascists of Europe and America to form the famous International Brigade and they remained in the fighting line until, in early 1938, the International Brigade was withdrawn from Spain. The Irish section formed part of the British Battalion and some were involved with the American Lincoln Brigade.

In Ireland, in 1936, the reactionary forces rallied great demonstrations in support of the Franco fascists. It was a time when the CPI and the left-wing Republicans had to contend with organised violence from the so-called Christian Front and there was the constant use of the pulpits to encourage anti-communist, pro-Franco feelings.

The Blueshirt movement as such no longer functioned, but its chief, General O'Duffy, joined

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the Christian Front platform and organised the so-called "Irish Christian Crusade" to support Franco. The deValera Government followed the League of Nations policy of non-intervention. The O'Duffy "Brigade" was a fiasco; within some months the 700 involved returned home very disillusioned by their experiences and were involved in recriminations and abuse of one another. Among the Irish with the International Brigade there was, for their numbers, a high rate of casualties. The Communist and Republican movements lost some very capable and promising workers in the struggle against fascism in Spain.

Second World War

With the outbreak of war in 1939, the Dublin Government declared for neutrality. The CPI declared in a statement against the war and against the involvement of the Six Counties which was, by the 1920 Act, automatically included with the UK. The CPI called for the withdrawal of the Six Counties from the war.

Arising from articles which appeared in the Party paper, *Irish Workers' Voice,* on the issues involved in the war for republicans and the working class movement, police actions were taken against leading Communists in Northern Ireland; Betty Sinclair, W. H. McCullough and Val Morahan received prison sentences.

In the conditions of neutrality in the Twenty-Six Counties it was made difficult for the Communist Party to function and the weekly paper was subjected to the severest Press censorship. At the time, all sections of the Press had to submit to Government censorship.

Following the Nazi attack on the Soviet Union, there was no easement of the problems the Communists had to contend with; but in the Six Counties the Party was greatly strengthened in membership and considerably expanded its activity. There was launched a weekly paper, *Unity,* which continues to appear now as the weekly paper of the Northern Area of the Communist Party of Ireland. As was the position in Britain, there were large-scale Party activities in the Six Counties, with great meetings, etc., in support of the Soviet Union and for the defeat of Nazism. Many leading British Party speakers participated in these meetings.

Irish Workers' League

Following defeats in by-elections, the deValera Government called a general election in 1948 and for the first time in 16 years was defeated by a combination of all the parties and individuals in opposition who were elected and these formed into a Coalition. There had been for some time a build up of discontent with the social and economic policies of the deValera Government. The Government had persisted in maintaining the wages standstill order of the war years until 1947 and only yielded to its removal after great trade union pressure. The health services were poor and TB was claiming many victims. The openings for employment were almost nil and emigration (mostly to Britain) was greatly increasing.

In the same year of 1948 a number of groups came together to form the Irish Workers' League; this title was chosen after much discussion, the resumption of the title of the Communist Party of Ireland was considered, but not agreed upon. The Party paper, *Irish Workers' Voice,* was resumed as a monthly.

In 1951 the Coalition Government was forced to a general election because of the disunity within it over the "Mother and Child Scheme," which occasioned the disfavour of the Bishops. The involvement of the Irish Workers' League in the 1951 general election prompted the anti-communist "crusaders" to mount an extraordinary campaign. Virtually a pogrom situation was created to frighten off in any form at all support for the IWL candidate; the Archbishop of Dublin, the recently-deceased Dr. McQuaid, came in with a special letter read in all churches in the constituency, warning that to vote for the Communist candidate would be a mortal sin. The newspapers and the other media churned out the world-wide anti-Communist barrage and a very large number of workers were confused and bewildered; the backward elements were encouraged to attack meetings and the Party workers selling the *Irish Workers' Voice.*

Against Cold War

The Dublin Coalition Government, in the 1948-53 period, with Sean MacBride as the Minister for External Affairs, sided with Churchill and the US Government in their anti-Communist aims in Europe and in Asia.

The Labour Party, with its trade union support, was for the Coalition policy. The Communists, emphasised that the Marshall Plan, NATO and the European Defence Council were all part of the imperialist design to involve all Ireland in its plan and to have neutrality abandoned.

There were at the time strong US pressures against Ireland's neutrality policy. The appointment of the American Archbishop, O'Hara, (instead of the usual Italian Prelate) by Pope Pius XII as Papal Envoy, in the hope of influencing a change in Irish policy was an outstanding example. Offices and libraries as US

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propaganda centres to promote cold war policies were opened in Dublin. Trade Union officials sent for special training courses in US universities. US Embassy officials requested and were allowed observer status at the annual meetings of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions. The Labour and trade union leadership acquiesced in the cold war policies. There were some notable exceptions among them.

The campaign to win support for the Stockholm peace appeal came under heavy attack with church sermons warning that support for the peace appeal was support for communism. Party public meetings often had to be defended from organised hooligan gangs. In face of such difficulties, the Party members held firm and pressed on with the work of increasing the sales of Party publications and winning new membership.

The Communists were the first to come out against the country joining the Common Market. The Fianna Fail Government, in the early 1960s was for joining, until the negotiations for Britain's entry fell through. The Labour leadership, like Fine Gael, did not oppose the Government's position. The Republicans, a united body at the time, had no position. In the general election of 1961, the Party was alone in warning that membership of the Common Market would limit national sovereignty, mean a loss in jobs and higher prices. In the 1971 referendum campaign, the Labour and trade union leadership and the Republicans had shifted and took the same position as the Communists had ten years earlier.

Party Re-united 1970

In the 1960s the Irish Workers' Party was the name of the organisation in the Twenty-Six Counties and the Communist Party in the Six Counties. There were no disagreements or conflicts in regard to national policies, but they did function separately. Some years earlier in the 1950s a Joint Council of representatives of the executives of the two organisations was created. From the work of this Council programmes for the two areas were published (*Ireland Her Own* and *Ireland's Path to Socialism*).

A further result of the work of the Joint Council was the organisation in March 1970, in Belfast, of the Congress which re-formed the Communist Party of Ireland on an all-Ireland basis.

The Party's centre is based in Dublin; the weekly paper, *Unity* is published from Belfast and the monthly paper, *Irish Socialist* and the theoretical journal, *Irish Socialist Review* are published from Dublin.

Britain and Ireland in the Common Market

A. Raftery

(The author is the editor of 'Irish Socialist')

Ireland joined the Common Market because Britain joined. The people of the six counties were not consulted. Neither were the British people. The twenty-six counties had a referendum.

The two major Parties, the employers' and farmers' organisations all mounted an unprecedented campaign to vote "Yes" to entry. The Labour Party, the Trade Unions, both Sinn Feins, the Connolly Youth Movement and the Communist Party campaigned against entry. So did Aontacht Eireainn, set up by the ex-Fianna Fail Minister Kevin Boland, and a number of groups formed to fight entry.

The pro-market argument boiled down, in spite of a lot of sunbursting, to the simple argument "If Britain joins so must we". People were convinced there would be economic collapse if we stayed out. The result was a massive "Yes" in favour of joining. In spite of political independence the economy of the Republic was always tied to that of Britain. This was sold to the people as the natural and inevitable situation.

The employers enclosed slips in the workers wage packets warning that if there was a "No" vote the business would have to close down. One factory, producing bowling alleys, was issued with such a warning. Within two months of the "Yes" vote it closed its doors.

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Integrated with British Monopolies

Britain joined the Common Market because British big business was prepared to sacrifice the people's interests for greater profits. Over the years since the setting up of the 26 county state the bigger Irish capitalists have become more and more closely integrated with British monopolies.

Ireland's trade, both North and South, is and was largely with Britain. The Irish financial structure is dominated by British banks. Irish agriculture largely catered to the British market, shipping beef on the hoof to be fattened in Britain, the most disadvantageous way possible for the Irish economy.

The Fianna Fail Party, while continuing to mouth the slogans of independence, in fact represents a capitalist class which has come to the end of the road as far as any real struggle for either political or economic freedom is concerned. All its actions in Government had the objective of bringing the Irish economy closer to that of Britain and of avoiding any action which might antagonise the British Government. Its Common Market Policy of integration with Britain and, from that, with the Western European monopolies was the cornerstone of all its policies. This was the reason for the dismissal of its most talented Ministers over allegedly sending arms to the North. It was presented as if Mr. Lynch's policy of a peaceful solution to the question of uniting the country had been infringed. In fact it was no pacifist sentiment but the displeasure of the British Government at even token support for the Civil Rights struggle in the North which caused Prime Minister Lynch to go against the sentimental attachment to Irish unity and independence of his own party.

Effect of Ireland's Entry

After even a short period the gloomiest prediction of those who opposed Irish entry are coming true. All over the State the smaller factories are closing down and the take-over by foreign monopolies of every aspect of Irish life is proceeding at a tremendous pace.

This process is personified in the person of an Irishman, Tony O'Reilly, at one time the Elvis Presley of the Rugby field. He was appointed as head of the semi-State company Erin Foods after its previous head, Major General Costello, had objected to the proposal to allow Heinz, the international monopoly, to become a partner in it. From Erin Foods he moved to one of the top jobs in Heinz. From there he, with a number of others, set up a holding company called Fitzwilliam Holdings which initially started to buy up smaller companies. It eventually merged with the Goulding Fertiliser Co., to form a new group called Fitzwilton. Then ICI bought a share in Fitzwilton and the take-overs proceeded.

The next step was that Mr. O'Reilly took over the Independent Newspaper group. This is by far the biggest newspaper group in Ireland, publishing national morning and evening newspapers and owning many provincial papers as well. In all these undertakings Mr. O'Reilly has had the backing of English-controlled banks.

In the Common Market set-up, whatever controls and safeguards limited political independence gave to the 26 counties have disappeared. At all levels the country is wide open. Even before joining the Common Market this policy was put into effect and the huge mineral finds of copper, zinc etc., are being exploited by foreign, mainly Canadian, mining companies with hardly any benefit to the Irish economy. The ore from these mines is shipped abroad in its crude state to be refined and the mining companies are paying no taxes on profits. What could be a source of profit, industrial development and employment for the Irish economy is only providing a couple of hundred jobs. A Study Group set up by students in Trinity College, Dublin, has calculated that over a short number of years the mining companies will make a profit of over £300 million out of the Irish mines. Already foreign monopolies have started to explore for natural gas and oil under the sea off Ireland's shores.

The Irish big capitalist sees the EEC as a gravy train. The farmers saw it as a way of breaking out of the stranglehold which Britain has had on our agriculture.

Food and Agriculture

The British ruling class by its cheap food policy, unquestionably did exploit the Irish farmers. Cheap food for Britain meant low prices in Ireland for cattle. What was not realised was that entry into the EEC would mean dearer prices for everything and that the higher price for cattle would have to be paid for by an increase in costs for almost every other item, including the raw materials for agriculture.

Since joining the EEC it has become obvious that the bigger powers have no intentions of giving hand-outs to the smaller countries. We now have the spectacle of the Irish and British Ministers for Agriculture being on diametrically opposed sides on the question of price increases for agricultural products. What was supposed to be a united benevolent club turns out to be a jungle, with the bigger lions getting the spoils.

For Ireland, North and South, and for Britain entry into the Common Market has meant huge price increases for the ordinary people. In the

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Republic the price of meat has increased over a hundred per cent in 6 months. Other food items have also soared.

One of the more hopeful developments in relation to Irish agriculture was the growth of a meat-processing industry. This meant that, instead of sending off cattle on the hoof, they were processed in Ireland and all the by-products were utilised. Since joining the EEC the meat-processing industry is on the verge of closing down due to the high prices which foreign buyers are prepared to pay for Irish cattle. Ancillary industries such as leather and glue and the industries which depend on them are suffering massive lay-offs also. The International Meat Co. in Dublin which employed over 800 workers six months ago now employs less than 400. "Redundancy" has become one of the most familiar everyday words.

At the same time foreign capital, much of it from the US, is coming into the country. What is at work here is a sophisticated form of neo-colonialism. The industries set up by foreign firms are capital intensive and employ very few workers. They are mainly engaged in the processing of imported raw materials. While the wealth of the country goes out in crude form (ore, cattle on the hoof) the work force is being utilised to process imported raw materials more cheaply than it can be done in the home countries of the big monopolies.

Another great advantage which was supposed to follow from joining the Common Market was that the border would become irrelevant and unity of the country would become inevitable. It was also argued that Britain wanted to get rid of Ireland and was only looking for the opportunity to get out.

In fact, British imperialism, while it may change its tactics, wants not only to hold on to the North, but also even more tightly to control the economy of the South as well.

It is also now confidently predicted that the Irish Sea will prove to be the bonanza area for natural gas and undersea oil. The Irish people will not benefit from these riches. It is the multi-national monopolies which are going to reap the profit from the undeveloped resources of Ireland.

The Irish Labour Party, which fought against entry into the Common Market, is now the junior partner in a Coalition Government dominated by Fine Gael which was even more enthusiastic about joining the EEC than Fianna Fail. The Foreign Minister, Dr. Garret Fitzgerald, at the time of the first application to join the EEC in 1961, was a writer on economics. He stated at that time that the Irish people would have to become used to the idea that the depopulation of the countryside would become a Government policy. This is precisely the role which Irish agriculture is to play. The people are to be driven off the land to make way for cattle. The Irish countryside is to be used to produce beef for Europe.

While there is opposition to these developments it is as yet confused and unchannelled. It is the Left and the Republicans who carry on the fight for Irish independence.

The trade union movement, which opposed entry into the EEC, has been silent since the Referendum. The movement will have to swing into action to fight the results of EEC entry if the scourge of redundancy which is beginning to sweep through Irish industry is to be halted.

United Action Needed

In the new situation arising from the entry of both Britain and Ireland into the EEC the necessity for united action between the British and Irish working class becomes more important than ever. The British workers are fighting Heath's wage freeze. Now the Irish employers are trying to use that wage freeze in order to keep down the wages of Irish workers. They argue that in a free trade situation Irish goods would become uncompetitive if wage increases in Ireland were higher than those in other EEC countries. In this way the employers in the Common Market hope to keep wages down to the level of the lowest paid working class in the EEC.

Ireland has become tied to what is reliably expected to be, in a short period, the weakest economy in the EEC, that of Britain. If a policy for the independence of Britain wins it will benefit the Irish people, just as the independence of Ireland would deal a shattering blow at the British ruling class. That is why it must be brought home to the British Labour movement that it is in its own interests to oppose British imperialism's policies in Ireland as well as in Britain.

As long as British Labour is tied to a bi-partisan policy on Ireland it will never be able to mount a proper fight against the Common Market. Imperialism's policies form part of a whole. For real progress every aspect of them must be fought.

Mr. Cosgrave sees the two islands as linked by the common interests of their ruling classes. To that conception must be opposed the common interests of the British and Irish working people in fighting for freedom and progress.

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